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Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 65/46 of 8 December 2010 on conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels, the General Assembly decided to give urgent consideration to the issues involved in conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels, and requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the subject and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixty sixth session. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. On 9 March 2011, the Secretariat sent a note verbale to Member States requesting their views on the subject. As of the writing of the present report, 14 replies have been received from the following States: Armenia, Colombia, Congo, El Salvador, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mexico, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Ukraine. Those replies are reproduced in section II of the present report. Subsequent replies will be issued as addenda.

II. Replies received from Member States

Armenia

[Original: English]
[19 May 2011]

General Assembly resolution 65/46 provides an opportunity to focus on challenges related to conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels, to identify the problems and shortcomings and look for solutions.

Armenia attaches high importance to cooperation within the framework of international organizations, in particular the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), dealing with arms control.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The OSCE deals with arms control, disarmament and security cooperation issues through its Conflict Prevention Centre and the Forum for Security Cooperation. The Joint Consultative Group overseeing the implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, though formally not being part of the OSCE, is closely linked to the work of other structures.

The Forum covers the Vienna Document 1999, Code of Conduct, Global Exchange of Military Information, as well as issues on anti-personnel landmines, small arms and light weapons and the national practice of export control. All of them envisage annual exchange of relevant information, and in the case of the Vienna Document there are also inspections and evaluation visits. Every year, Armenia receives three designated-area inspections along with one evaluation visit. The ongoing process of the update of the Vienna Document 1999 is very timely and will strengthen the military transparency and enhance confidence-building.

The OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, and the OSCE Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting, as well as the OSCE Meeting to Review the Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons are major instruments of the Centre and Forum to reflect and evaluate the implementation of the OSCE confidence and security-building measures.

Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe

The Treaty is the cornerstone of European conventional arms control regime and Armenia perceives it as a key to provide for security and military predictability. Since 1992, the implementation of the Treaty has created a secure environment in Europe, significantly enhanced mutual trust and reduced almost to non-existence the possibility of a major military conflict.

As with the other OSCE arms control measures, the Treaty requires the annual and periodic exchange of military information and envisages arms reduction and verification through inspections.

Armenia fully supports the negotiations on modernization of the Treaty and believes that the end result should be a viable, legally binding, all-weather document that will continue to serve the purpose of peace and mutual trust.

Violation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe by Azerbaijan

The manyfold increase of Azerbaijan's military budget (since 2000 by 470 per cent; defence spending in 2011, which makes up $3.12 billion, will account for about 20 per cent of the Government's total expenditures) over the last decade and the incessant military rhetoric heighten the tension in the region and seriously hamper the process of dialogue aimed at reaching solutions to existing problems. The blatant violation by Azerbaijan of its legally binding obligations under the Treaty and excessive accumulation of conventional armaments are a serious threat to security in the South Caucasus region and beyond.

According to official information, as of 1 January 2011, Azerbaijan significantly exceeds its established ceilings in two categories of Treaty Limited Equipment. The Azeri holdings in battle tanks are 381 (permitted ceiling is 220) and in artillery are 469 (permitted ceiling is 285). In 2010, there was a sizeable increase of holdings also in the categories of attack helicopters and combat aircraft.

Armenia regularly alerts the international community in regard to such open defiance and inadmissibility and danger of negligence. The issue is being raised in international bodies like the United Nations, European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Collective Security Treaty Organization and North Atlantic Treaty Organization. If the Treaty implementation is not adhered to it will create a serious predicament for the process of modernization of the Treaty currently under way in Vienna. That, in turn, will unlock an extremely dangerous arms race trend at the subregional level.

Colombia

[Original: Spanish]
[19 May 2011]

Principles for conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels

Colombia attaches particular importance to the conclusion of binding instruments that establish regulations on the control of conventional arms, enhance control over international arms transfers and prevent the diversion of arms to the

illicit market, in particular to illegal armed groups or unlawful non-State actors, organized crime and ordinary crime.

Colombia has accordingly manifested its interest in establishing a global regime with clear international norms for States that control the international and cross-border movement of all conventional arms, small arms and light weapons, spare parts, ammunition, explosives and related parts, as well as complementary accessories and their respective technology.

For this reason, since 2008, Colombia has been participating in the various forums established within the framework of the United Nations to assess the scope and feasibility of an arms trade treaty. In this context, Colombia has presented the following general principles, which it also considers to be relevant to the development of regional and subregional agreements on conventional arms:

(a) Regional and subregional agreements should be consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, as indicated in article 52 of the Charter of the United Nations;

(b) Recognition that arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation are essential to peace and international security;

(c) Respect for international law, including human rights law and humanitarian law;

(d) Respect for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the inherent right to self-defence, the sovereignty and equality of all States and non-interference in internal affairs;

(e) The right of all States to produce, export, import, transfer and possess conventional arms for the purpose of self-defence;

(f) The right and obligation of States to safeguard their population and maintain control over their territory in view of the various forms of armed violence resulting from the actions of illegal armed groups, organized crime and ordinary crime, which affect each State internally and its ability to respond;

(g) Recognition that arms transfers to non-State actors have a negative impact on the internal security of States, as such arms can be used to commit crimes against humanity or serious violations of international humanitarian law;

(h) Prohibition of the transfer of conventional arms to non-State actors;

(i) Recognition of the importance of dialogue and cooperation among States on security and defence matters, with the goal, inter alia, of improving systems for conventional arms control, enhancing the transparency of transactions and building trust;

(j) Adoption of general measures to improve systems for monitoring and controlling conventional arms, taking into account the different situations and capacities of States;

- Establishment of measures and procedures to control and monitor all aspects of the trade in conventional arms, including identification and monitoring of end users

- Establishment of clear measures and procedures for appropriate handling, collection, storage and final disposal of conventional arms

Congo

[Original: French]
[30 April 2011]

Introduction

Further to the note verbale by which the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs requested the views of the Government of the Republic of the Congo with regard to the drafting of regional agreements on conventional arms control, the Republic of the Congo wishes to reiterate its commitment to international and regional disarmament in accordance with the United Nations doctrine of collective security. In that connection, the Republic of the Congo transmits herewith its views with regard to the drafting of regional agreements on conventional arms control.

General background

Analysis of the conventional arms situation in Africa and proposal of views

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, as described in the 2001 Information Booklet, is crucial to ensuring better conventional arms control in Africa. Using the Information Booklet, which comprises five main parts, we have identified the regional aspects in respect of which the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 46/36 L of 9 December 1991, calls upon Member States to cooperate at a regional and subregional level, taking fully into account the specific conditions prevailing in the region or subregion, with a view to enhancing and coordinating international efforts aimed at increased openness and transparency in armaments. Although Africa has contributed less overall to the Register than have other continents, it is nevertheless among those that face the greatest security challenges, given the many centres of armed conflicts in Africa. It is therefore necessary to promote and/or strengthen conventional arms control in Africa.

In October 1999, the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa adopted the N'Djamena Declaration (A/54/530-S/1999/1141). In the Declaration, the Committee recommended the creation of a uniform weapons register at the national and subregional levels and urged all States to give effect to the recommendations contained in the guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H. The arms control policies of a number of African countries eschew the principle of registration in the United Nations Register. The recommendation in the N'Djamena Declaration to establish a subregional register has gone unheeded.

It is important to note that, even if a subregional register were to exist, it would merely serve to supplement the United Nations Register in terms of the weapons to be accounted for. Indeed, as a general rule, the arms and equipment that do not fall under the categories of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms are those most used in the many conflicts in Africa, especially in the sub-Saharan region. Light weapons are a case in point.

To engage African States in conventional arms control requires their full participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms; this in turn will lead to the universalization of the Register. There is therefore a great need for international aid to contribute to disarmament in Africa through the establishment of related cooperation mechanisms.

Furthermore, resolution 46/36 L, entitled "Transparency in armaments", the principle of which is reiterated in resolutions 47/52 L of 15 December 1992 and 52/38 R of 9 December 1997, expresses the international community's desire for transparency in arms control.

In a number of countries, including in Africa, that desire for transparency is frustrated by the excessive use of the designation of "classified information", which makes transparency impracticable. This explains the weak contribution of African countries to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Agreements at the continent and subregional levels are aimed at building confidence and security among States include:

- African Union Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact (Abuja, 31 January 2005);
- Non-Aggression Pact among the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (Yaoundé, 8 July 2006);
- Mutual Assistance Pact among the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (Malabo, 24 February 2000);
- Non-Aggression, Solidarity and Mutual Assistance Pact among the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (Brazzaville, 28 January 2004).

Regional and subregional disarmament stakeholders should refer to these regional instruments to persuade African States to endorse the concept of transparency in armaments.

This issue should be included in the agenda of meetings of African Union Heads of State and of Government as well as conferences in their respective subregions.

By referring to examples of other continents, including the Americas, African States will be better prepared to sign agreements on conventional arms control.

El Salvador

[Original: Spanish]
[2 May 2011]

Conventional arms control represents a solution for fostering and maintaining mutual trust among States at the regional level. The implementation of measures for conventional arms control can serve to prevent conflicts between States.

In order to preserve harmony, peace and mutual trust, it is important to maintain the military balance in the region. It is also important to establish and uphold control measures to prevent any country from obtaining arms covertly, which would create tension in the area and a risk of surprise military attacks, fragmenting

the balance achieved among States. Reining in the arms race will forestall the possibility of surprise attacks by any State or the outbreak of hostilities.

A flow of information based on mutual trust, transparency and truthfulness should be maintained between States. It is also important to adopt measures to verify compliance with controls on conventional arms.

Maintaining a conventional arms control regime requires an organization that can follow up on questions and measures adopted by participating parties and on reports of problems that arise in implementing the measures established or adopted by the participating parties.

Conventional arms control will contribute to the peace and stability of the region by ensuring that States maintain the lowest possible level of armaments required to preserve a balance in defence capabilities within the region.

Jordan

[Original: Arabic]
[28 April 2011]

The General Assembly resolution on conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels promotes peace and security at the regional and international levels.

States which manufacture and maintain large arsenals of conventional arms have a responsibility to control such arms, and can make thereby an effective reduction in their number and strengthen agreements concerning regional security.

Conventional arms control should go hand in hand with negotiations and conventions reducing stocks of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

It is important that conventional arms control measures respect the right of States to possess arms in order to guarantee their own security and that no distinction should be made between States in that regard.

The principle of equal security for all must be the basis on which conventional arms control measures are taken. The security of any State represents a red line, and is the legitimate right of every State. The concept of State security must be the same for all States: the security of one State cannot be more important than that of another State.

In order to ensure the success of arms measures at the regional and subregional levels, it is important to consider and address the reasons for an arms race. The fact that one regional power is heavily armed will prompt the other States of the region to acquire arms in order to maintain strategic balance in respect of conventional arms.

It is therefore essential to focus on resolving international conflicts and, in particular, the Arab-Israeli conflict, in order to prevent an arms race in the region.

Jordan has consistently affirmed its respect for the principles set forth in United Nations instruments relating to arms, sovereignty and the equality of States and the right of States to own and acquire conventional arms for the purposes of legitimate self-defence.

Jordan is committed to United Nations resolutions and has signed numerous international agreements and conventions relating to conventional and other arms. It shares the international community's concerns in respect of the issue.

Kazakhstan

[Original: Russian]
[26 May 2011]

Every year, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, Kazakhstan provides the following information:

- A report on military expenditures over the previous fiscal year (resolutions 54/43 and 56/14);
- Data on imports and exports for inclusion in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (resolutions 46/36 L, 47/52 L and 56/24 Q);
- A national report on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (resolution 58/241).

The following events were held in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2010:

- An international seminar on combating the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons in Central Asia was held in Almaty on 16 and 17 September. The event was attended by representatives of States members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The purpose of the seminar was to discuss controls on arms imports, exports, brokering and marking, international small arms control standards, the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons and future developments.

The seminar participants included representatives of the Central Asian States, the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in Geneva and other international organizations specializing in the field of small arms control. Officials of the Kazakhstan Ministries of Defence, Internal Affairs and Emergency Situations, the National Security Committee and the Customs Control Committee of the Ministry of Finance attended the seminar.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[31 May 2011]

The Ministry of National Defence wishes to make the following points:

- In regard to this matter, resolutions of international legitimacy adopted by the United Nations should be duly complied with, and the Charter should be respected;
- Particular emphasis should be placed on the resolution of international disputes, in particular the Arab-Israeli conflict;

- States are equal in terms of sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is important to prevent an arms race and build confidence;
- All concerned regional States should remain compliant with a view to precluding any repetition of the double standards applied in connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. States should be held accountable in the event of non-compliance;
- The manufacture and transfer of arms should be controlled, and the smuggling of and illicit trafficking in arms should be suppressed in order to ensure that they do not fall into the hands of terrorists;
- Legislation should be enacted at the regional and international levels in order to limit the proliferation of such weapons, while allowing for the possibility of their individual or collective use to resist occupation or defend territory;
- Multilateralism should be strengthened as a means of furthering negotiation on arms regulation and disarmament.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[2 May 2011]

Concerning this issue, the Permanent Mission wishes to recall that the Mexican Government believes that it is neither feasible nor appropriate for the Conference on Disarmament to consider the formulation of principles that could serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control, for the following reasons:

- The Conference on Disarmament is not competent to carry out such an analysis, given that it is a forum for negotiation and does not have a mandate to conduct studies on conventional arms;
- Given the state of paralysis and working methods that persist in the Conference on Disarmament, it is not feasible to add the task of developing principles on conventional arms control to the pending issues on its agenda. Furthermore, it is unacceptable to continue allocating human, financial, professional and political resources to an institution that does not achieve its objectives.

Montenegro

[Original: English]
[20 May 2011]

In pursuit of its strategic goals of accession to NATO and membership of the European Union, Montenegro has clearly committed itself to giving full support and contribution to building and strengthening both regional and European stability and security through consistent fulfilment of international commitments in the field of control and verification of arms.

In the military and political fields, after the renewal of state independence and accession to OSCE and the United Nations, Montenegro assumed numerous

commitments that are fulfilled by the Ministry of Defence of Montenegro along with other relevant institutions. After the ratification of recent agreements and conventions pertaining to disarmament, non-proliferation of arms, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms, export and import control, control of arms and anti-mine activities, acting as an equal party, Montenegro started fulfilling its commitments pertaining to the implementation of international legal acts.

The Ministry of Defence of Montenegro actively participates in the implementation of the following agreements and conventions:

- Vienna Document 1999
- Agreement on Subregional Arms Control
- Chemical Weapons Convention
- Biological Weapons Convention
- Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Conventional Weapons
- Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines (Ottawa Convention)
- Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons

From its foundation onwards, the Ministry of Defence and its Department for Arms Control have actively participated in bilateral cooperation with the Republic of Greece, the Republic of Hungary and the Federal Republic of Germany in the field of arms control. Cooperation has been most intensive with the verification centre from Germany.

Bilateral cooperation encompasses activities related to the education of arms control inspectors, information exchange, approving of reciprocal additional inspection, meetings for assessment and improving cooperation, as well as donation of information technology equipment to the Department for Arms Control. Apart from bilateral cooperation, verification centres in Europe, and particularly those in the regions, are particularly important as they provided all their expertise for the foundation of the Department for Arms Control and were instrumental in adopting standards for arms control and the fulfilment of obligations prescribed by OSCE.

The most intensive cooperation regarding arms control at the regional level is in compliance with the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control stemming from annex 1B, article IV, of the Dayton Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control was made on 14 June 1996 and was signed by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Srpska, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Croatia and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Since 2005 Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina made an agreement that Bosnia and Herzegovina took over the implementation of the agreement on behalf of all three parties to the Agreement.

After it renewed independence, Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia signed a bilateral agreement on the principles and procedures for implementation of the Agreement on Subregional Arms Control in Podgorica on 6 July 2007, whereby Serbia and Montenegro became independent parties to the Agreement thereof.

The Agreement served as an important benchmark for building security and trust in the post-war years. The essence of the Agreement is the significant downscale of armaments (including: combat tanks, artillery of 75mm calibre and above, combat aircrafts, attack helicopters and armoured combat vehicles) below agreed limits starting from 1 November 1997 as well as the cooperation among armed forces and ministries of defence of parties to the Agreement.

The Agreement comprises 15 articles and 6 protocols (protocols on inspections reduction, subregional consultative commission, exchange of information and notifications, on the existing types of armaments and on the procedures of reclassification of models and versions of combat capable trainer aircrafts). Also, the parties to this Agreement have pledged to issue statements on voluntary limitation of the *number of* armed forces personnel.[1]

Personal representative of the OSCE Chairmanship in Office, with his office in Vienna is personally responsible for implementing the Agreement; meetings of that Subregional Consultative Commission are attended by the personal representatives of the OSCE Chairmanship and members of the Contact Group (United States of America, Russian Federation, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain and Italy) as witnesses, along with the parties themselves (Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro).

With a view to come up with modalities to streamline the Agreement as well as for the purpose of analysing its implementation, regular and extraordinary meetings are organized twice a year: standing work groups (10 meetings so far), subregional constitutional commissions (45 meetings held so far) and Review Conference events two years (7 conferences so far).

Significant track record has been achieved in the implementation of the Agreement so far and all parties to the Agreement came quite closer to reaching the basic goal, the implementation of the Agreement, establishing new forms of cooperation in the field of security focused on creating transparency and trust and also to achieving balanced and standing levels of defence force at the lowest level required for providing conditions for operation of security system of each party to the Agreement.

Today, the Agreement reflects a new quality of relations among its signatories having in mind the fact that in 2007 Montenegro officially became a new party to the Agreement, is fully committed to all forms of cooperation within its remits and is ready to consider proposals for further improvement of mechanisms of arms control at the subregional and regional levels.

As of 2007, Montenegro has implemented the following:

- 24 inspections of declared sites (12 on its own territory and 12 on the territory of other parties)

[1] At the 43rd meeting of the Subregional Consultative Commission, held from 2 to 5 November 2009 in Novi Sad declarations on voluntary limitation of the *number of* armed forces, personnel and stocks were adopted and approved, as follows: Bosnia and Herzegovina to limit itself with 16,000 staff (9,910 standing staff), Montenegro to limit itself with 5,000 staff (2,400 standing staff), Republic of Croatia limits itself with 44,000 staff (19,712 standing staff), Republic of Serbia to limit itself with 119,605 staff (29,357 standing staff).

- Public inspection of the arms reduction in Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina completed inspection in March 2009
- Two visits of the personal representative of the OSCE Chairmanship in Office in a fact-finding mission for arms that Montenegro wanted to export, in 2007 and 2009, respectively.

Montenegro reduced the number of heavy armaments as follows:

- 61 combat tanks, period June-July 2007 — 60 tanks destroyed — scrapped into pieces and one given to a museum as an exhibit
- 46 cannons of 130mm, in March 2009, 45 cannons destroyed — scrapped into pieces and one given to a museum as an exhibit
- 24 howitzers 122mm, in two rounds, in December 2009 — 8 howitzers and August 2010 — 16 howitzers exported to Armenia
- 100 mortars 82mm, in two rounds, August 2009 — 30 mortars and December 2009 — 70 mortars exported to Armenia
- 50 mortars of 120mm, in two rounds — August 2009 — 12 mortars and December 2009 — 38 mortars exported to Armenia
- 6 combat plates N-62 (Super Galeb G-4), in October 2010, Montenegro delivered to Serbia based on the Agreement of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and Government of Montenegro on exchange of means and documentation

All together this reduction totalled over 280 pieces of heavy armaments for four years.

The representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations and of the Arms Control Department regularly take part in the meetings of the Standing Work Group (held in Vienna) and in the meetings of the Subregional Consultative Commission (held in countries that hold chair in Subregional Consultative Commission). So far, Montenegro has hosted three meetings of the Subregional Consultative Commission and it held the chair in as many six-month rotations (Budva in 2007 and 2008, and Kolašin in 2010).

All activities implemented in Montenegro were made transparent and open to the inspectors from the region and representatives of the office of the personal representative of the OSCE Chairmanship in Office. Montenegro supported all proposals in favour of building and enhancing trust, security and development of subregional and regional cooperation.

The implementation of activities related to transferring ownership of the Agreement from the personal representative of the OSCE Chairmanship in Office from Vienna to parties to the Agreement is under way. By the end of 2011 the first phase is scheduled to be completed (no lags and it runs smoothly), and the second phase with full transition of ownership has not been legally regulated and determined, but is expected to be finished by the end of 2014.

The Arms Control Department — Verification Centre of the Ministry of Defence is vested with the implementation of the Agreement in Montenegro.

Within its remit, the Ministry of Defence has fully delivered on its obligations regarding arms control and it works on improving security measures and trust both at the regional and the global levels.

Norway

[Original: English]
[29 April 2011]

Norway fully supports conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels. Norway is committed to the Convention on Conventional Forces in Europe, and hopes that outstanding issues related to that Convention may be solved as soon as possible in order to ensure its entry into force.

Norway remains convinced that regional conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels must have as a point of departure the regional and subregional context. Norway is not convinced that the Conference on Disarmament would be the right forum to formulate principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control. Moreover, Norway fundamentally questions the role of the Conference given the fact that no negotiations have taken place in this body since the end of the 1990s and that it is not open for all States Members of the United Nations.

Portugal

[Original: English]
[13 June 2011]

Export Controls of Military Products

All items on the European Common Military List and the Wassenaar Munitions List, under the title "conventional arms", are subject to export controls.

The import and export of said items are subject to a licence issued by the Ministry of Defence, which is the Portuguese licensing authority for military products.

Transit of the items on the aforementioned lists is also regulated. A permit must be obtained from the licensing authority.

All applications are considered by the Ministry of Defence on a case-by-case evaluation, based on an overall assessment. Each application is also considered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the light of foreign policy interests. Accordingly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs checks every import and export request against the criteria enshrined in the European Union Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP, of 8 December 2008, which is legally binding for all European Union member States. Briefly, these minimum standard criteria are as follows:

- Respect for the international commitments of member States, in particular the sanctions decreed by the Security Council or the European Union, agreements on non-proliferation and other subjects, as well as other international obligations

- Respect for human rights in the country of final destination as well as respect by that country of international humanitarian law
- Internal situation in the country of final destination, as a function of the existence of tensions or armed conflicts
- Preservation of regional peace, security and stability
- National security of the member States and of territories whose external relations are the responsibility of a member State, as well as that of friendly and allied countries
- Behaviour of the buyer country with regard to the international community, in particular its attitude to terrorism, the nature of its alliances and respect for international law
- Existence of a risk that the equipment will be diverted within the buyer country or re-exported under undesirable conditions
- Compatibility of the arms exports with the technical and economic capacity of the recipient country, taking into account the desirability that States should achieve their legitimate security and defence needs with the least diversion of human and economic resources for armaments

Furthermore, import and export licences are not granted if in contravention of United Nations, European Union or OSCE embargoes. For small arms and light weapons, the Wassenaar Arrangement guidelines adopted in 2002 also apply.

The necessary documentation for obtaining an export licence depends, inter alia, on the exporter and the recipient, the importing country, the amount of weapons, the intended use and quantity. The documentation required includes an import licence or an international import certificate from the competent authorities in the importing country.

For military equipment, an end-user certificate with a non-re-export clause is also required.

Regulation of brokering activities

Portugal has implemented the European Union Council Common Position 2003/468/CFSP, of 23 June 2003 on the control of arms brokering with the entry into force of the law 48/2009, of 5 August 2009.

All brokers are required to register with the Ministry of Defence. Brokers who have not been granted an authorization are not allowed to conduct brokering activities.

A licence for a specific brokering transaction must be obtained from the Ministry of Defence and, where required by national legislation, from the authorities with jurisdiction over the place of residence or establishment of the broker. Records of all persons and entities which have obtained such a brokering licence must be kept for a minimum of 15 years.

Russian Federation

[Original: Russian]
[27 April 2011]

The Russian Federation believes that the following principles could form the basis of regional conventional arms control agreements:

- Military sufficiency;
- Balanced approach and reciprocity;
- Military significance;
- Contribution to confidence- and security-building;
- Enhanced transparency and predictability;
- Cost-effectiveness;
- Verifiability;
- Further adaptability;
- Equality of rights and obligations.

This list is derived from the paper put forward by Russia within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), entitled "Draft OSCE programme for further action in the field of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures", which contains wording taken from documents previously adopted by OSCE.

Turkmenistan

[Original: Russian]
[1 June 2011]

Turkmenistan, an independent and neutral State, actively contributes to the strengthening of public peace and stability and recognizes the fundamental conventions, treaties and agreements that constitute the system of international security, as well as other generally accepted rules of international law.

As stated in article 6 of the new version of the Constitution of Turkmenistan adopted on 26 September 2008, "Turkmenistan, as a fully fledged member of the international community, maintains a foreign policy based on the principles of permanent positive neutrality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, renunciation of the use of force and of participation in military blocs and unions and the promotion of peaceful, friendly and mutually beneficial relations with the countries of the region and States throughout the world".

The United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia was opened in Ashgabat on 10 December 2008. Turkmenistan fully supports the efforts of the United Nations to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in Central Asia and abides strictly by all the conventions it has signed and all the international commitments it has made with respect to the prohibition of these types of weapons.

As a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Turkmenistan, along with the other member States, submits an annual military report in accordance with the Helsinki Document of 1992. OSCE arms inspectors, comprising experts from other nations, come to Turkmenistan every year to conduct inspections based on the annual report submitted in accordance with the Vienna Document 1999 of the negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures.

Ukraine

[Original: Russian]
[15 April 2011]

Ukraine is promoting the establishment of new confidence- and security-building mechanisms on the basis of mutual understanding and openness in military and political activities and is playing an active role in regional and subregional conventional arms control systems.

1. Ukraine believes that the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is an important instrument for strengthening regional security.

Consequently, Ukraine fully complies with its commitments under the Treaty.

In addition, in 2006, Ukraine made additional unilateral commitments to lower the ceilings on armaments and military equipment, as follows:

Battle tanks — from 4,080 to 3,200;
Artillery systems — from 4,040 to 3,600;
Combat aircraft — from 1,090 to 800;
Attack helicopters — from 330 to 250.

In addition, Ukraine is proceeding with the disposal of armaments and military equipment to bring the total below the ceilings specified in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The status as at 1 January 2011 is as follows:

Battle tanks — 2,525 (ceiling: 3,200);
Armoured combat vehicles — 3,855 (ceiling: 5,050);
Artillery systems — 3,149 (ceiling: 3,600);
Combat aircraft — 517 (ceiling: 800);
Attack helicopters — 147 (ceiling: 250).

With regard to the fulfilment of additional unilateral commitments with respect to the coast guard and the marine corps, Ukraine provides an annual report to other nations on the armaments and military equipment in the possession of those units. Following a significant decrease, the status as at 1 January 2011 is as follows:

Battle tanks — 39;
Armoured combat vehicles — 171;
Artillery systems — 72;
Armoured combat vehicles — 3.

The number of military personnel in Ukraine remained unchanged in 2010 and totalled 150,000 as at 1 January 2011.

2. Within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Vienna Document 1999 forms the regulatory framework for international cooperation in the area of confidence- and security-building measures.

The Government has enhanced both bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the context of regional security systems in order to establish a zone of stability and mutual confidence around Ukraine.

In accordance with chapter X of the Vienna Document 1999, Ukraine is developing bilateral cooperation with neighbouring States on confidence- and security-building measures in border areas.

Ukraine is actively cooperating with Belarus, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia through the following bilateral intergovernmental agreements:

- Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on confidence- and security-building measures and the development of bilateral military contacts;
- Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Slovak Republic on additional confidence- and security-building measures;
- Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland on confidence- and security-building measures;
- Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on additional confidence- and security-building measures.

The agreements provide for prior notification of military activities, invitations to observe exercises, and inspections of and visits to military units.

In accordance with the agreements, the parties each conduct two to three confidence- and security-building measures per year in each of the countries in addition to the quota of inspections established in the Vienna Document 1999.

Since the entry into force of the agreements in 2001, 115 measures have been conducted in Ukraine and elsewhere.

The annual working meetings held to assess the implementation of the agreements provide an opportunity for open dialogue to take place on the establishment of new mechanisms for cooperation.

An important confidence-building step is the agreement of the parties to refrain from tactical military exercises at the battalion level and higher at their neighbours' borders.

We believe that Ukraine's active implementation of existing international treaties on conventional arms control, particularly the agreements concluded with neighbouring States on additional confidence- and security-building measures, promotes the maintenance of regional and subregional peace and stability.

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Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Report of the Secretary-General

1. By paragraph 11 of its resolution 65/91 entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, to prepare a report on the efforts of States that had ratified the Treaty towards its universalization and possibilities for providing assistance on ratification procedures to States that so request it, and to submit such a report to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request. Information on the subject provided by the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization is contained in the annex.

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Annex

Report on efforts of States towards the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty*

June 2010-May 2011

State	*Date/period*	*Activities and context*	*Comments*
1. Bilateral level			
1 (a) Activities relating to annex 2 States			
Belgium	June 2010-May 2011	Belgium, both bilaterally and as a member of the European Union, was supportive of the Plan of Action of the European Union and, in its bilateral contacts with annex 2 States, including, when appropriate, at a high level, systematically raised the importance of ratifying or signing the Treaty and of its entry into force	
Brazil	June 2010-May 2011	Brazil took every appropriate opportunity in its bilateral contacts to raise the importance of the signature and ratification of the Treaty with the annex 2 States that had not yet signed and/or ratified it	
	19 March 2011	The joint communiqué issued by President Dilma Rousseff and President Barack Obama of the United States of America, on the occasion of his visit to Brazil on 19 March 2011, highlighted "the need to bring into force the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty"	
Bulgaria	June 2010-May 2011	Bulgaria raised the issue of the signature and ratification of the Treaty in its bilateral contacts, especially with annex 2 States that had not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India and Pakistan, and urged them to do so without further delay, stressing the importance of the entry into force of the Treaty	
Croatia	June 2010-May 2011	Croatia raised the issue of the signature and ratification of the Treaty in bilateral contacts, especially with annex 2 States that had not yet signed or ratified the Treaty and urged them to do so without further delay, stressing the importance of the entry into force of the Treaty	

* The present report includes activities that have been completed (i.e., that are not ongoing or planned) and that were aimed at promoting the entry into force of the Treaty.

State	*Date/period*	*Activities and context*	*Comments*
Estonia	June 2010-May 2011	Estonia raised the issue of Treaty ratification in bilateral meetings with annex 2 States that had not yet signed and/or ratified the Treaty with the aim of achieving its entry into force	
France	June 2010-May 2011	France conducted regular discussions with annex 2 States that had not yet signed or ratified the Treaty. In those discussions, France seized every opportunity to stress the importance that it attaches to the entry into force of the Treaty	
Germany	June 2010-May 2011	Germany reiterated the importance of the early entry into force of the Treaty and urged its ratification, in particular by remaining annex 2 States, in high-level bilateral talks and relevant multilateral forums	
	October 2010	During his visit to India in October 2010, the Federal Foreign Minister called on the Government of India, both in private and in public, to accede to the Treaty. In his speech at the Indian Institute of Technology, he described the entry into force of the Treaty as a crucial first step towards achieving the Global Zero goal	
Japan	June 2010-May 2011	Japan took every suitable opportunity in its bilateral contacts to raise the matter of the ratification of the Treaty with the annex 2 States that had not yet signed or ratified the Treaty	
Mexico	June 2010-May 2011	Mexico supported the efforts made by the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization with the aim of having annex 2 States that had not yet signed and/or ratified the Treaty do so as soon as possible in order to achieve its entry into force	
	June 2010-May 2011	In bilateral meetings with annex 2 States, Mexico reiterated the importance of signing/ratifying the Treaty at the earliest opportunity with the aim of achieving its early entry into force	
Morocco	June 2010-May 2011	Morocco carried out démarches with the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to encourage further progress towards Indonesia's ratification of the Treaty, explaining the necessity and pertinence of finalizing the ratification process	
New Zealand	June 2010-May 2011	In relevant multilateral, regional and bilateral forums, workshops and meetings, New Zealand seized every opportunity to promote the entry into force of the Treaty, especially with annex 2 States that had not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, and urged them to do so without further delay, stressing the importance of the entry into force of the Treaty	

State	Date/period	Activities and context	Comments
	June 2010-May 2011	New Zealand raised the importance of the early entry into force of the Treaty with several annex 2 States that had not yet ratified the Treaty	
Norway	June 2010-May 2011	Norway raised the issue of signature and ratification of the Treaty in bilateral contacts, especially with annex 2 States	
	November 2010	Representatives from various institutions in China involved in the Treaty's verification visited the Norwegian National Data Centre (NORSAR). The visit included technical discussions on issues of common interest, as well as a visit hosted by Norway to an international monitoring system seismic station	
Philippines	June 2010-May 2011	The Philippines has recognized the critical role of the Treaty as a key confidence-building mechanism to promote cooperation with other States in resolving issues that have ramifications on regional and global security, and has consistently supported the call for the early entry into force of the Treaty	
Poland	June 2010-May 2011	Poland raised the issue of the ratification of the Treaty in bilateral meetings, at the ministerial level and below, with annex 2 States that had not yet signed and/or ratified the Treaty	
Russian Federation	June 2010-May 2011	In bilateral contacts with annex 2 States, the Russian Federation persistently called upon them to sign/ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. In that context, the Russian Federation consistently seeks the earliest ratification of the Treaty by the United States of America, calling upon the United States Administration to move from its intention to ratify the Treaty, declared in a number of bilateral and multilateral documents, to practical actions in that regard	
Spain	November 2010	Spain held consultations on non-proliferation and disarmament issues with the United States of America and stressed the importance of its ratification	
Sweden	June 2010-May 2011	In its bilateral contacts, at the ministerial level and below, Sweden raised the importance of the entry into force of the Treaty with several annex 2 States that had not yet signed and/or ratified the Treaty	
Turkey	June 2010-May 2011	In its bilateral contacts, Turkey stressed to several annex 2 States the importance of signing and ratifying the Treaty	
Ukraine	June 2010-May 2011	In bilateral meetings between Ukrainian officials and their counterparts in annex 2 States that had not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, Ukraine urged their Governments to sign and ratify the Treaty	

State	*Date/period*	*Activities and context*	*Comments*
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	June 2010-May 2011	The United Kingdom took every suitable opportunity in bilateral discussions to encourage the remaining annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty, as necessary, in order to bring about the early entry into force of the Treaty; most recently, for example, the United Kingdom has welcomed Indonesia's commitment to ratify the Treaty	
1. Bilateral level			
1 (b) Activities relating to non-annex 2 States			
Belgium	June 2010-May 2011	Belgium, both bilaterally and as a member of the European Union, was supportive of the Plan of Action of the European Union and, in its bilateral contacts with non-annex 2 States, including, when appropriate, at a high level, systematically raised the importance of ratifying or signing the Treaty and of its entry into force	
Brazil	June 2010-May 2011	Brazil took every appropriate opportunity in its bilateral contacts to raise the importance of the signature and ratification of the Treaty with non-annex 2 States that had not yet signed and/or ratified it	
Ecuador	June 2010-May 2011	Whenever relevant during bilateral meetings with non-annex 2 States, Ecuador underlined the importance of the Treaty and promoted its early entry into force	
Estonia	June 2010-May 2011	In bilateral contacts with non-annex 2 States, Estonia seized every suitable opportunity to raise the issue and to encourage States to make efforts to sign and/or ratify the Treaty	
France	June 2010-May 2011	France conducted regular discussions with non-annex 2 States that had not yet signed or ratified the Treaty. In those discussions, France seized every opportunity to stress the importance that it attaches to the entry into force of the Treaty	
	26 January-2 February 2011	On the occasion of the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, France, in its capacity as Co-Chair of the Article XIV process, carried out démarches in the capitals of several African and Asian States to encourage ratification of the Treaty	
	24 September 2010	On the occasion of the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, France, in its capacity as Co-Chair of the Article XIV process, carried out démarches in the capitals of several African and Asian States to encourage ratification of the Treaty	

State	*Date/period*	*Activities and context*	*Comments*
	30 May-1 June 2010	On the occasion of the Africa-France Summit, France, in its capacity as Co-Chair of the Article XIV process, carried out démarches in the capitals of several African States to encourage ratification of the Treaty	
Hungary	14 December 2010	A working luncheon was organized in New York by the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations with the participation of the Executive Secretary and Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of Bangladesh, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Indonesia, the Philippines, Mauritius and representatives of the Caribbean Community. The purpose of the meeting was the promotion of the Treaty, with particular emphasis on civil and scientific applications of the International Monitoring System. Tsunami warning support capabilities were especially highlighted, as the invited States have a particular interest in that field	
Japan	June 2010-May 2011	Japan constantly took every suitable opportunity in its bilateral contacts to raise the matter of the Treaty with remaining non-annex 2 States	
Mexico	June 2010-May 2011	Mexico supported the efforts made by the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization with the aim of having non-annex 2 States that had not yet signed and/or ratified the Treaty do so as soon as possible in order to achieve its entry into force, thereby joining the large number of States signatories that call for an early entry into force of the Treaty	
Morocco	June 2010-May 2011	As Co-Chair for the Article XIV process, Morocco actively carried out démarches with several African States aimed at encouraging the ratification of the Treaty and at strengthening the verification regime, especially in Angola, the Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea. Morocco emphasized the importance and technological benefits of the International Monitoring System and capacity-building for States	
New Zealand	June 2010-May 2011	Wherever relevant during bilateral occasions, New Zealand underlined to non-annex 2 States the importance of the Treaty and promoted its earliest possible entry into force	
	June 2010-May 2011	New Zealand provided voluntary financial contributions to enable experts from non-annex 2 developing countries to participate in official technical meetings of the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, thereby reiterating the universal character of the Treaty	

State	Date/period	Activities and context	Comments
Norway	January 2010-May 2011	Norway supported a bilateral cooperative project between NORSAR and the Institute of Seismology in Bishkek. The project focuses on capacity-building in implementing the Treaty, and the Kyrgyzstan National Data Centre receives support in terms of technical training, software and hardware	
	June 2010-May 2011	Norway has been supporting a bilateral cooperative project between NORSAR and the Institute of Geophysical Research in Kazakhstan on capacity-building in implementing the Treaty within Central Asia. As part of that project, an international technical training centre in support of the verification functions of the Treaty has been established in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Training courses for participants from Central Asian countries started in late 2010 and will continue into 2012 with support from that project	
Russian Federation	June 2010-May 2011	In the framework of its bilateral contacts with the non-annex 2 States that had not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, the Russian Federation persistently continued to call upon them to join the Treaty as soon as possible	
Slovakia	June 2010-May 2011	Slovakia continued to support the universalization of the Treaty in relevant bilateral meetings	
Spain	November 2010	The National Geographic Institute organized in Madrid, in collaboration with the Provisional Technical Secretariat to the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, an advanced capacity-building course for national data centre technical staff in Eastern Europe	
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	June 2010-May 2011	The United Kingdom took every suitable bilateral opportunity to encourage non-annex 2 countries to sign and/or ratify the Treaty	
	May 2011	The United Kingdom has made a voluntary contribution to a project of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization to promote the signature and ratification of the Treaty in 12 small island developing States	
Ukraine	June 2010-May 2011	Ukraine conducted regular discussions with non-annex 2 States that had not yet signed or ratified the Treaty. In the discussions, Ukraine seized every opportunity to stress the importance that it attaches to the entry into force of the Treaty	

State	Date/period	Activities and context	Comments
2. Multilateral level			
2 (a) Global			
Belgium	June 2010-May 2011	Belgium, both in its national capacity and as a member of the European Union, reiterated its support of the Treaty and the importance it attaches to its early entry into force in different appropriate international forums	
	September 2010	The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium participated in the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and delivered the European Union statement in favour of the entry into force of the Treaty	
	December 2010	Belgium voted in favour of General Assembly resolutions 65/59, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments"; 65/72, entitled "United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons"; 65/91, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty"; and 65/127, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization". All of those resolutions call, inter alia, for the prompt entry into force of the Treaty	
Brazil	28 April 2010	Brazil participated in the Second Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, and supported the final document which reiterates the demand for the total ban of all nuclear tests and the need for reaching universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, particularly by all nuclear-weapon States and annex 2 States, and called for upholding and maintaining the moratorium on such tests or any other nuclear explosions pending the entry into force of the Treaty	
	May 2010	Brazil supported the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which highlights the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and reinforces the call for its early entry into force	
	June 2010-May 2011	Brazil actively engaged in all relevant multilateral forums to promote the early entry into force and universalization of the Treaty	
	8 December 2010	Brazil, together with 56 States, co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 65/91, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty"	

State	Date/period	Activities and context	Comments
Bulgaria	June 2010-May 2011	In relevant multilateral forums such as the General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament and the 2010 Review Conference, Bulgaria used every opportunity to underline the importance of the Treaty and its early entry into force	
	August 2010	In support of the International Day Against Nuclear Tests, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria posted a national statement about the Treaty on the dedicated website established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan	
	September 2010	The Minister for Foreign Affairs participated in the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York, and signed the joint ministerial statement	
	September-December 2010	Bulgaria supported the adoption of the following General Assembly resolutions: 65/59, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments"; 65/72, entitled "United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons"; 65/91, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty"; and 65/127, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization"	
Croatia	May 2010	The Director-General of the Directorate for Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration participated in the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in New York, and delivered a statement in favour of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty	
	December 2010	Croatia supported the activities of the United Nations aimed at ensuring the early entry into force of the Treaty, one of the pillars of the international regime of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, Croatia voted in favour of General Assembly resolutions 65/72, entitled "United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons"; 65/91, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty"; and 65/127, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization", all of which call for, inter alia, the prompt entry into force of the Treaty	
Ecuador	June 2010-May 2011	During a meeting of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, in its statement on the theme of nuclear disarmament, Ecuador called for the universalization of the Treaty	

State	*Date/period*	*Activities and context*	*Comments*
Estonia	May 2010	In his statement at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in New York, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia urged the States whose adherence is required for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to enter into force, to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay and without conditions	
	23 September 2010	The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia participated in the Fifth Ministerial Meeting, in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, during which he endorsed the Joint Ministerial Statement reaffirming Estonia's strong support for the Treaty	
	October 2010	Estonia co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 65/91, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty", which was adopted at its sixty-fifth session	
Finland	June 2010	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided a submission for the website dedicated to the International Day Against Nuclear Tests and established by Kazakhstan, and called upon all States that had not yet signed and ratified the Treaty to do so	
	July 2010	The Decision of the Council of the European Union (2010/461/CFSP), on support for activities of the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in order to strengthen its monitoring and verification capabilities and in the framework of the implementation of the European Union Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, was adopted with the support of Finland	
	23 September 2010	The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland delivered a statement in support of the Treaty at the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York. Finland, belonging to the Friends of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Au alia, Canada, Finland, Japan and the Netherlands), was among the co-organizers of the meeting	
	December 2010	Finland co-sponsored resolution 65/91, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty", which was adopted by the General Assembly on 8 December 2010	
France	June 2010-May 2011	In relevant multilateral forums, France seized every opportunity to promote the entry into force of the Treaty	

State	Date/period	Activities and context	Comments
	June 2010-May 2011	In its capacity as Co-Chair of the Article XIV process, France chaired (with Morocco) several consultations with States signatories on the implementation of an action plan for facilitating the entry into force of the Treaty and on the preparation of the Seventh Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty	
	23 September 2010	In its capacity as Co-Chair of the Article XIV process, France, together with Morocco and the Friends of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, organized the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York on 23 September 2010, which called for the prompt entry into force of the Treaty	
	8 December 2010	France co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 65/91, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty"	
Germany	June 2010-May 2011	As a member of the Group of Eight, Germany actively supported the démarches of the Group carried out under the Canadian Presidency urging ratification of the Treaty	
	23 September 2010	The Federal Foreign Minister actively participated in the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York on 23 September 2010, and stressed the security benefits of the Treaty's entry into force in his speech at the General Assembly	
Holy See	September 2010	On the occasion of the 54th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Holy See stated that the entry into force of the Treaty is of the highest priority	
	October 2010	During a meeting of the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Holy See stated that it had been making every effort and encouraged States to intensify their own efforts, with a view to helping the entry into force of the Treaty	
Japan	23 September 2010	The Friends of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and France and Morocco, in their capacity as Article XIV coordinators, co-hosted the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York. The Foreign Minister participated in the Meeting, and appealed to the political leaders of the remaining annex 2 States to act decisively for early signatures and ratifications of the Treaty	

State	Date/period	Activities and context	Comments
	January-March 2011	Japan invited 10 seismology experts from 10 countries to the training course in global seismological observation and its application for nuclear test monitoring technology	
Lithuania	24 February 2011	The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, met with the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and expressed support of the activities of the Preparatory Commission	
Mexico	8 December 2010	Mexico co-sponsored resolution 65/91, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty", which was adopted by the General Assembly	
	June 2010-May 2011	Mexico participated in the meetings of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and its subsidiary bodies, as well as in consultations aimed at promoting the entry into force of the Treaty and reinforcing the verification regime so as to become fully effective	
	30 April 2011	Mexico supported the joint statement issued by the ministerial meeting of the cross-regional group on non-proliferation and disarmament, held in Berlin on 30 April 2011	
Morocco	June 2010-May 2011	Morocco participated regularly in the meetings of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and its subsidiary bodies, as well as in consultations aimed at promoting the entry into force of the Treaty	
	June 2010-May 2011	Morocco contributed to the project aimed at facilitating the participation of experts from developing countries in technical meetings of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	
	September 2010-May 2011	In its capacity as Co-Chair with France of the Article XIV process to promote entry into force of the Treaty, Morocco developed an action plan and actively engaged in all relevant multilateral, bilateral and regional levels to promote the entry into force of the Treaty	
	23 September 2010	Morocco attended the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, in which the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation declared, together with his French counterpart, the importance of urging the entry into force of the Treaty and encouraged States present to take action	

State	Date/period	Activities and context	Comments
	October 2010	During a meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and other regional meetings, Morocco actively worked to promote the Treaty among Arab and African legislative institutions and support diplomatic efforts. On 29 October 2010, during the fifth plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, held in Rabat, the Executive Secretary emphasized the role that parliaments could play in the promotion of the Treaty	
	December 2010-February 2011	Morocco voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 65/91, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty". Morocco warmly welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 65/127, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization", underlining the cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission	
New Zealand	23 September 2010	New Zealand associated itself with the Joint Ministerial Statement adopted at the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York, encouraging those States whose ratification is required for entry into force to ratify the Treaty without delay	
	December 2010	New Zealand is a main sponsor of the annual resolution "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty" at the General Assembly and co-sponsored resolution 65/59, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments", adopted by the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session	
	January-May 2011	The New Zealand Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control authored an article entitled "The end of nuclear testing is within our reach", published in the magazine of the Preparatory Commission, *CTBTO Spectrum*. The article highlights the importance of universalization of the Treaty	
Norway	June 2010-May 2011	Norway has supported resolutions in the General Assembly that encourage all countries to ratify the Treaty, and repeated that plea in national statements in the General Assembly, at the International Atomic Energy Agency and in relation to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons	
	June 2010-May 2011	Norway participates actively in the efforts of Working Group B of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization to implement the verification regime of the Treaty in preparation for its entry into force. Representatives of NORSAR contribute to the work and acted as advisers to its Chair	

State	Date/period	Activities and context	Comments
	June 2010-May 2011	Norway contributes to a project of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, which facilitates the participation of experts from developing countries in technical meetings of the Preparatory Commission	
	September 2010	The Foreign Minister took part in and addressed the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held on 23 September in New York. Norway also supported the Joint Ministerial Statement	
	March 2011	The China Arms Control and Disarmament Association organized a scientist-to-scientist workshop on the technical aspects of a ban on nuclear testing. The workshop was supported financially by Norway and participating Norwegian experts shared their knowledge	
Philippines	May 2010	The 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was successfully presided over by the Philippines, reaffirmed the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. The Philippines joined other States in supporting the Final Document of the Review Conference, which highlighted the essential role of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty within the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Actions 10-14 of the Final Document contained measures that all States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must undertake with respect to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, including pushing for the early entry into force of the Treaty and refraining from testing nuclear weapons pending entry into force of the Treaty	
	June 2010-May 2011	The Philippines supported the efforts of France and Morocco, in their capacity as coordinators of the Article XIV process, to request the Secretary-General to convene a Conference on facilitating the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, specifically at the sidelines of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly	
	June 2010-May 2011	The Philippines consistently supported the expansion of the International Monitoring System as it is crucial in strengthening the verification regime of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	

State	Date/period	Activities and context	Comments
	23 September 2010	At the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held on 23 September 2010, the former Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Alberto G. Romulo, and other foreign ministers issued a joint ministerial statement reaffirming their support for the Treaty	
	23 September 2010	Former Secretary of Foreign Affairs Romulo also delivered a statement endorsing the joint ministerial statement and urging delegations, especially those that took part in the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and that agreed to the action points, to hold fast to their obligations. The Philippines urged nuclear-weapons States that have remained outside the Treaty to lead by example and drew attention to the absolute necessity to enshrine voluntary commitments by States on a moratorium on testing. The statement also cited the active participation of the Philippines in the verification regime of the Treaty	
Poland	June 2010-May 2011	Poland, both in its national capacity and as a member State of the European Union, continued to address the issue of the signature, ratification and early entry into force of the Treaty in the appropriate multilateral forums	
Republic of Korea	30 August-4 September 2010	The Republic of Korea hosted the tabletop exercise on visual observation for on-site inspection for an international team of participants and trainers in Daejeon, Republic of Korea	
	23 September 2010	The Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea participated in the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, emphasized the need for the early entry into force of the Treaty, and urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea not to conduct any further nuclear tests and to come into full compliance with all its obligations under Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009)	
	September 2010-May 2011	The Korea Institute of Geoscience and Mineral Resources participated in workshops on the following: machine learning and earth structure, held from 6 to 9 September 2010, in Montpellier, France; infrasound experiment in the eastern Mediterranean, held from 25 to 27 January 2011, in Eilat, Israel; operation and maintenance, held from 9 to 13 May 2011, in San Diego, United States of America; and on-site inspection (workshop-19), held from 16 to 20 May 2011, in Baden, Austria	

State	*Date/period*	*Activities and context*	*Comments*
	26 October-8 December 2010	The Republic of Korea jointly proposed and voted in favour of a draft resolution entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty", which was adopted by the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on 26 October 2010 and by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/91 on 8 December 2010	
Russian Federation	June 2010-May 2011	The Russian Federation continued to pursue a policy aimed at supporting the Treaty and actively participated in implementing the action plan adopted at the Sixth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in 2009	
	June 2010-May 2011	The Russian Federation cooperated with all interested States in the United Nations, other international organizations and forums in order that the Treaty may become an effective legal international instrument	
	June 2010-May 2011	The Russian Federation maintained a moratorium on nuclear testing, at the same time proceeding from the assumption that this measure, however important, cannot substitute the main goal of the early entry into force of the Treaty	
	May 2010	The Russian Federation supported mention of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons	
	September 2010	The Russian Federation took part in the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York in September 2010, and supported its joint ministerial statement	
	December 2010	The Russian Federation supported and co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 65/91, "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty", adopted on 8 December 2010	
	October 2010-May 2011	The Russian Federation participated with other States that had ratified the Treaty, in preparation of the seventh Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to be held in New York in September 2011	
Serbia	September 2010	Serbia participated in the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, convened in New York on 23 September 2010, when the Joint Ministerial Statement was adopted. At the meeting, Serbia associated itself with the Statement of the European Union	

State	*Date/period*	*Activities and context*	*Comments*
Singapore	October 2010	Singapore voted in favour of the following General Assembly resolutions that called for, inter alia, the entry into force of resolutions 65/72, entitled "United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", and 65/91, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty"	
Slovakia	June 2010-May 2011	Slovakia continued to support the universalization of the Treaty in relevant multilateral forums	
	29 August 2010	Slovakia hailed the International Day Against Nuclear Tests. Slovakia also used that occasion to welcome the positive signals from some annex 2 countries to ratify the Treaty and appealed to all remaining States that had not yet done so to follow suit	
	September 2010	In his speech at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the President of Slovakia stated that Slovakia was prepared to cooperate with partners on a number of priorities, such as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty	
	September 2010	Slovakia took part in the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and supported the Joint Ministerial Statement adopted at that meeting	
	October 2010	During a meeting of the First Committee of the General Assembly, Slovakia stressed the need for the Treaty to enter into force. The support for the Treaty was also reiterated at appropriate occasions by the Slovak Chair of the First Committee	
	December 2010	Slovakia co-sponsored General Assembly resolution, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty"	
Spain	September 2010	Spain participated in the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty at the ministerial level, which was held in New York in September 2010 and expressed its support for the efforts towards the universalization of the Treaty by joining the Joint Ministerial Statement adopted at the Meeting	
Sweden	June 2010-May 2011	The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden stressed on several occasions the importance of the Treaty in his public outreach	
	June 2010-May 2011	Sweden supported the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as an important instrument contributing to the early entry into force of the Treaty	

State	*Date/period*	*Activities and context*	*Comments*
	June 2010-May 2011	The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden actively lent his support to the Global Zero initiative, a step-by-step plan calling for a stop of the spread of nuclear weapons and phased and verified reductions of nuclear stockpiles, with the eventual goal of the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons	
Switzerland	June 2009-May 2010	Switzerland called for the entry into force of the Treaty in all its statements in relevant forums	
	September 2010	Switzerland participated in the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York on 23 September 2010, and called for ratification of the Treaty by those annex 2 States that had not yet ratified it	
	December 2010	Switzerland voted in favour of General Assembly resolutions 65/59, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments"; 65/72, entitled "United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons"; and 65/91, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty". All of those which called, inter alia, for the entry into force of the Treaty	
Turkey	May 2010	During the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Turkey urged countries that had not signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to take the necessary steps in this framework	
	April 2010	During the national statement delivered by the Prime Minister at the Nuclear Security Summit, Turkey outlined the necessity of the early entry into force of the Treaty	
	June 2010-May 2011	Turkey, with nine other countries, is a member of the informal group established as a result of the Australian-Japanese initiative that is acting in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament. Turkey participated in the First Ministerial Meeting of the group and has been part of the political announcement/paper delivered at the meeting, where it was mentioned that the early entry into force of the Treaty was a necessary step in order to advance in the field of nuclear disarmament. That necessity has been also mentioned during the speech delivered at that meeting by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey	

State	Date/period	Activities and context	Comments
	June 2010-May 2011	Turkey provided a contribution, as a donor country, to finance the participation of experts from developing countries in technical meetings of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	
	June 2010-May 2011	In its multilateral contacts, Turkey outlined the importance attached to the early entry into force of the Treaty and provided in that framework all kinds of support, including technical and financial. That aspect was also mentioned in the opening statement of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly	
	29 August 2010	The necessity to strengthen the understanding that the Treaty constitutes the basic pillar for nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear proliferation, was also outlined in the message published by the President of Turkey on the occasion of the International Day Against Nuclear Tests, on 29 August	
Ukraine	June 2010-May 2011	Within the Conference on Disarmament, Ukraine repeatedly stressed the importance of the entry into force of the Treaty. Ukraine called upon the nuclear-weapon States to maintain a moratorium on nuclear testing and any other nuclear explosives and to refrain from any actions that would hamper the aims of the Treaty	
	June 2010	Ukraine hosted the Eleventh Annual International Export Control Conference, on the theme of "Strategic Trade in the 21st Century", which dealt with non-proliferation issues. More than 70 countries were represented at the conference. Moreover, such international bodies as the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Australian Group and the Nuclear Suppliers Group took part in the event	
	September 2010	Ukraine actively participated in the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty held at United Nations Headquarters. Ukraine reiterated its commitment to the universalization of the Treaty. In addition, Ukraine joined the European Union statement in that regard	
United Arab Emirates	September 2010	In an initiative towards progressing the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the United Arab Emirates joined forces with other countries to form a cross-regional group whose purpose is to take forward the consensus outcomes of the 2010 Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and jointly to advance the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agendas as mutually reinforcing processes. The 10 countries, Australia, Canada, Chile,	

State	Date/period	Activities and context	Comments
		Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, jointly declared their commitment to the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and agreed on approaches to achieve nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear power, highlighting the importance of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty	
	2011	The United Arab Emirates joined nine other countries for the second meeting of the Non-proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and issued a joint declaration calling for the entry into force of the Treaty as another major objective on the multilateral agenda. The meeting emphasized that an effective end to nuclear testing will enhance and not weaken national as well as global security and would significantly bolster the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The 10 countries are committed to utilizing various diplomatic opportunities to urge States that have not done so to sign and ratify the Treaty and promptly complete the steps necessary to bring it into force. The group also committed to support the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty Organization in setting up an effective monitoring and verification system and commended the work already accomplished	
United Kingdom	June 2010-May 2011	The United Kingdom made a further voluntary contribution to a project to enable experts from developing countries to attend official technical meetings of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, enhancing the universalization of the Treaty and helping to build awareness of the benefits of the Treaty in developing countries	
	August 2010	The United Kingdom gave a message of support for Kazakhstan's initiative on the International Day Against Nuclear Tests, urging all those countries still to ratify the Treaty to do so as soon as possible	
	September 2010	The United Kingdom supported the Joint Ministerial Statement on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, adopted at the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York on 23 September 2010; the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister of State of the United Kingdom attended the meeting and delivered a national statement in support of early entry into force	
	December 2010	The United Kingdom co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 65/91 in support of the Treaty	

State	Date/period	Activities and context	Comments
2. Multilateral level			
2 (b) Regional			
Belgium	June 2010-May 2011	Belgium, both in its national capacity and as a member State of the European Union, continued to address the issue of the signature, ratification and early entry into force of the Treaty in the appropriate regional forums	
Brazil	June 2010-May 2011	During the 40th Plenary Session of the Organization of American States, held in June 2010, Brazil supported resolution 2533, which urged States to consider signing or ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as soon as possible, in particular the States listed in annex 2 to the Treaty, so that it may enter into force in the shortest possible time	
	June 2010-May 2011	Brazil actively engaged in the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean to promote the universalization of the Treaty. At the XX Special Session of the Agency's General Conference, held on 18 November 2010, Brazil highlighted the importance of urging States that had not yet ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to do so as soon as possible	
Bulgaria	June 2010-May 2011	Bulgaria supported European Union Council Decision 2010/461/CFSP in support of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization's monitoring and verification system that was adopted on 26 July 2010, with a view to strengthening the capabilities of the Preparatory Commission to detect potential nuclear tests	
Ecuador	June 2010-May 2011	As a member State of the Organization of American States (OAS), Ecuador actively supported the positions, statements and contributions of the organization in support of the Treaty. Declarations and positions during regional conferences and other regional events reflect an invitation for all countries to quickly accede to the Treaty and to support its entry into force and its universality	
	June 2010-May 2011	As a member State of the Union of South American Nations, Ecuador, in its capacity of President of the group, supported and proposed under the new regional regime a warranty in order to preserve South America as a zone free of nuclear weapons, and support for all mechanisms including the Treaty	
Estonia	June 2010-May 2011	As a member State of the European Union, Estonia supported all relevant statements, positions, initiatives and financial contributions of the European Union in support of the Treaty	

State	*Date/period*	*Activities and context*	*Comments*
France	October 2010	In its capacity as Co-Chair of the Article XIV process, France participated in the regional workshop for African States, organized by Morocco, and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, held in Rabat on 28 and 29 October	
Germany	June 2010-May 2011	As a member State of the European Union, Germany actively supported the relevant statements, positions and contributions of the European Union in support of the Treaty	
Hungary	January-May 2011	During this period, Hungary held the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union and, in that capacity, led the coordination of the work of European Union experts for the Treaty based in Vienna. Hungary performed that duty in the spirit of its long-standing commitment to non-proliferation and its support of the entry into force of the Treaty. During the Presidency, an informal working luncheon was organized with the participation of the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and Heads of Missions of the European Union. A number of outreach meetings were also held with Arab countries, Israel, the United States of America, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 States, with the aim, among others, of promoting the entry into force of the Treaty. At the European Union meeting of Heads of Missions held in April, Hungary presented a European Union note on strengthening outreach activities, and a draft European Union statement in support of the entry into force of the Treaty was forwarded to Brussels for further consideration	
Lithuania	June 2010-May 2011	Lithuania joined every activity performed by the European Union on a bilateral or multilateral level to stress the importance of the early entry into force of the Treaty, and urged all the States that had not yet signed and/or ratified the Treaty, in particular annex 2 States, to do so without further delay	
Morocco	24 September 2010	In its capacity as Co-Chair with France of the Article XIV process, from 24 September 2010 to September 2011, and within the framework of the France-Morocco action plan aimed at the entry into force of the Treaty, Morocco organized, with the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, a regional workshop, held in Rabat on 28 and 29 October 2010, to promote the entry into force of the Treaty among African States that had not yet signed or ratified the Treaty	

State	*Date/period*	*Activities and context*	*Comments*
New Zealand	August 2010	New Zealand supported language promoting the universalization of the Treaty in the 2010 Pacific Islands Forum Communiqué	
Philippines	June 2010-May 2011	The Philippines was actively involved in the Asia-Pacific region in promoting the signing and ratification of the Treaty among countries in the region. The Philippines continued to work within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for the universalization of the Treaty through such efforts as bilateral consultations, participation in the conferences on facilitating the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and active participation in General Assembly discussions pertaining to the Treaty and the nuclear disarmament agenda in general	
	June 2010-May 2011	The Philippines has consistently expressed its views on the Treaty in meetings of the ASEAN Regional Forum, which is the primary mechanism for dialogue and cooperation on security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. The convening of the second and third intersessional meetings of the Regional Forum on non-proliferation and disarmament held in Singapore from 5 to 7 July 2010, and from 23 to 25 February 2011 in Las Vegas, United States, are major steps in expanding dialogue and promoting cooperation and mutual understanding on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. During the meetings, the Philippines emphasized its commitment to international efforts to achieve universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty	
Poland	June 2010-May 2011	Poland, both in its national capacity and as a member State of the European Union, continued to address the issue of the signature, ratification and early entry into force of the Treaty in the appropriate multilateral forums	
Republic of Korea	2-3 December 2010	The Republic of Korea organized the ninth United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues, held in Jeju Island, the Republic of Korea. Under the theme "Nuclear renaissance and international peace and security", the conference reaffirmed the importance of the early entry into force of the Treaty	
Singapore	February 2011	At the third ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting, which focused on non-proliferation and disarmament, Singapore urged all annex 2 States that had not ratified the Treaty to do so as soon as possible	

State	*Date period*	*Activities and context*	*Comments*
Spain	June 2010-May 2011	Spain, as a member State of the European Union, supported all outreach activities at the technical and political levels, including those aimed at the nine outstanding annex 2 States	
Sweden	June 2010-May 2011	Sweden underlined the importance of the early entry into force of the Treaty through the European Union	
	June 2010-May 2011	Sweden, through the European Union, continued outreach activities at the political and technical level, in particular towards the remaining nine annex 2 States, whose ratification is required for the Treaty's entry into force	
	June 2010-May 2011	Sweden was among the initiators of a European Union working paper, entitled "The capacity of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty verification regime" (NPT/CONF.2010/WP.55), presented at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons	
United Kingdom	June 2010-May 2011	The United Kingdom fully supported efforts by the European Union to promote the early entry into force of the Treaty, including through the European Union's various joint actions in support of the Treaty, and in various European Union statements, notably that by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, on behalf of the European Union, at the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York on 23 September 2010	

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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the interim report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/211.

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Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief

Summary

In the present report, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, provides an overview of his activities since the submission of the previous report to the General Assembly (A/65/207).

The Special Rapporteur then focuses on the role of the State in promoting interreligious communication. In this context, "interreligious communication" is understood to include various forms of exchange of information, experiences and ideas of all kinds between individuals and groups belonging to different theistic, atheistic and non-theistic beliefs, or not professing any religion or belief. The Special Rapporteur emphasizes that communication and public debate constitute a crucial element for human rights to become a reality. He stresses that freedom of religion or belief can flourish only in a climate of open public discourse. At the same time, it is also important to be aware of possible adverse side effects that may occur in the context of interreligious dialogue projects; for example, if intrareligious diversity is undervalued, religious communities are portrayed in a stereotypical manner or full inclusiveness of interreligious dialogue projects is falsely claimed. In this context, the Special Rapporteur outlines some guidelines to address any adverse side effects.

In his conclusions and recommendations, the Special Rapporteur encourages States to take a constructive role in promoting interreligious communication, based on respect for every human being's freedom of religion or belief. The Special Rapporteur points to a number of possibilities for States, including encouraging interreligious communication by publicly expressing their appreciation for well-defined dialogue projects; providing financial subsidies to existing or newly created projects; facilitating dialogue among members of various religious or belief groups in the framework of the State itself; and developing forums for regular encounters of people of different religious or belief affiliations. Besides promoting "formal" interreligious dialogue, the Special Rapporteur argues that States should also become more aware of the potential of "informal" interreligious communication across different groups that is not organized explicitly along denominational lines, for example through informal settings in multicultural neighbourhoods, schools, clubs and other public services.

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I. Introduction

1. Twenty-five years ago, the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief was created by the Commission on Human Rights pursuant to its resolution 1986/20. The Human Rights Council renewed the Special Rapporteur's mandate in its resolution 6/37 and extended it for a further period of three years through resolution 14/11. During the fourteenth session of the Council, Heiner Bielefeldt was appointed as Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; he took office on 1 August 2010.

2. In section II of the present report, the Special Rapporteur provides an overview of his activities since the submission of the previous report to the General Assembly (A/65/207). In section III, the Special Rapporteur puts a thematic focus on the role of the State in promoting interreligious communication. His conclusions and recommendations with regard to interreligious communication are reflected in section IV.

II. Activities of the Special Rapporteur

3. Activities include sending allegation letters and urgent appeals to States concerning individual cases; conducting official country visits; participating in meetings with representatives of States, religious or belief communities, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations; and issuing public statements. The present overview of activities since 1 August 2010 is organized under five headings pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 6/37 and 14/11.

A. Promotion of the adoption of measures at the national, regional and international levels to ensure the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of religion or belief

4. The Special Rapporteur continues to promote the right to freedom of religion or belief at the national, regional and international levels. At the national level, the Special Rapporteur participated in an expert hearing on 27 October 2010, held by the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid of the German Parliament. During the public hearing in Berlin, a number of questions relating to the topic "freedom of religion and European identity" were discussed by the experts and members of Parliament.[1]

5. At the regional level, the Special Rapporteur attended the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Freedom of Religion or Belief held by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna on 9 and 10 December 2010. Ahead of Human Rights Day 2010, he also issued a joint statement together with the director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, calling upon States to remove undue restrictions on freedom of religion or belief.[2] In addition, on 15 March 2011, the Special Rapporteur met with members of the European Commission and the Human Rights Working Group of the Council of the European Union in Brussels. On 26 May 2011, the Special

[1] See www.bundestag.de/bundestag/ausschuessel7/a17/anhoerungen/Religionsfreiheit/.

[2] See www.osce.org/odihr/74525.

Rapporteur was invited by the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights for a hearing on freedom of religion or belief.

6. At the international level, the Special Rapporteur joined a press statement on 17 September 2010 in anticipation of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals.[3] In their joint press statement, the 26 special procedures mandate holders argued that the implementation of the agreed outcome document (General Assembly resolution 65/1) must have a stronger focus on human rights, not only to ensure the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, but to also make them meaningful for the billions of people who need them most. The mandate holders emphasized that some groups, including those who face religious discrimination, too often find themselves forgotten. The mandate holders added that poverty gaps would increase unless programmes such as those to achieve the Millennium Development Goals addressed the unique circumstances of those groups and the causes and effects of the discrimination that limits access to education and jobs.

B. Identification of existing and emerging obstacles to the enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion or belief and presentation of recommendations on ways and means to overcome such obstacles

7. The Special Rapporteur has held public or bilateral meetings with representatives of States and civil society organizations to discuss existing and emerging obstacles to the enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion or belief. He met with numerous members of religious or belief communities and held public briefings with them, for example in Asunción; Barcelona, Spain; Brussels; Geneva; New York; Oslo; and Toronto, Canada.

8. In Vienna (9 and 10 February 2011) and Nairobi (6 and 7 April 2011) the Special Rapporteur participated in two expert workshops on the prohibition of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred. In 2011, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is holding a series of such workshops to gain a better understanding of legislative patterns, judicial practices and policies with regard to the concept of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred, while also ensuring full respect for freedom of expression as outlined in articles 19 and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. For the various regional workshops the Special Rapporteur presented joint submissions together with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.[4]

9. The Special Rapporteur conducted a country visit to Paraguay from 23 to 30 March 2011, and he is very grateful for the cooperation of the Government. At the conclusion of his visit, he commended the open and tolerant atmosphere in Paraguay at both the governmental and societal levels.[5] At the same time, he stressed that there was still much room for improvement with regard to more effective implementation of human rights, particularly in terms of

[3] See www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10344&LangID=E.

[4] See www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/opinion/articles1920_iccpr/index.htm.

[5] www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10903&LangID=E.

non-discrimination. The Special Rapporteur drew special attention to the indigenous peoples' long history of suffering from discrimination, neglect, harassment and economic exploitation. While noting that the indigenous representatives he met mostly agreed that the general attitude towards their traditional beliefs and practices had become more respectful in recent years, he stressed that the imposition of religious doctrines and practices, possibly against the indigenous peoples' will, was not a matter of the past only but persisted to a certain degree today. The Special Rapporteur encouraged the Government of Paraguay to continue supporting the interreligious forum initiated two years ago, while at the same time ensuring open and transparent participation by all interested groups and sectors of society.

10. Continuing his predecessors' follow-up procedure concerning country visit reports, the Special Rapporteur on 5 November 2010 sent follow-up letters with regard to those missions undertaken by the previous mandate holder in 2008; to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, India and Turkmenistan. The Special Rapporteur requested updated information on the consideration given to his predecessor's recommendations, the steps taken to implement them and any constraints that may prevent their implementation. The follow-up tables containing the conclusions and recommendations of the related mission report, and information from the Government and relevant United Nations documents, including from the universal periodic review, special procedures and treaty bodies, are available online.[6]

C. Examination of incidents and governmental actions incompatible with the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief and recommendation of remedial measures

11. The Special Rapporteur has continued to engage in constructive dialogue with States by sending them allegation letters and urgent appeals for clarification of credible allegations of incidents and governmental actions incompatible with the provisions of the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. Since the creation of the mandate, the Special Rapporteur has sent some 1,250 allegation letters and urgent appeals to a total of 130 States. The communications sent by the Special Rapporteur between 1 December 2009 and 30 November 2010 and the replies received from Governments are summarized in his latest communications report (A/HRC/16/53/Add.1), which also includes recommendations of remedial measures.

12. The Special Rapporteur's communications report provides evidence of worrying allegations of the disappearance, torture, arrest and detention of individuals belonging to religious minorities or belief communities. He is very much concerned about intercommunal violence, which has resulted in the killing of hundreds of persons, including many women and children. His communications also relate to death threats and discrimination against converts, as well as statements inciting violence directed against members of religious minorities. The Special Rapporteur has also taken up allegations of public manifestations of religious intolerance, stigmatization of persons based on their religion or belief and public

[6] See www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/Visits.aspx.

announcements of disrespectful acts. Further cases involve attacks on places of worship and religious tensions related to religious sites. The Special Rapporteur has also analysed problematic legislation, including on blasphemy. In his statement to the Human Rights Council on 10 March 2011, he referred to horrific consequences of related controversies, including loss of life, and extended his deepest condolences to the families affected.[7]

13. Country visits offer further opportunities to examine and analyse incidents and governmental actions in greater detail. Since the establishment of the mandate, the Special Rapporteur has conducted 32 country visits, including one follow-up mission. The Special Rapporteur is grateful for the invitation by the Government of the Republic of Moldova to undertake a fact-finding mission in September 2011. Updated information about the Special Rapporteur's visit requests and forthcoming missions is available on the OHCHR website.[8]

14. On 10 March 2011, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the mandate, the Special Rapporteur launched a reference e-book with observations and recommendations by the four mandate holders who have served as Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief since 1986. The "Rapporteur's digest on freedom of religion or belief"[9] is a 108-page downloadable compilation of relevant excerpts from thematic and country-specific reports produced by Angelo d'Almeida Ribeiro (serving from March 1986 to March 1993), Abdelfattah Amor (serving from April 1993 to July 2004), Asma Jahangir (serving from August 2004 to July 2010) and Heiner Bielefeldt (serving since August 2010). For ease of reference, the digest is arranged according to the five topics of the mandate's framework for communications, as outlined in the last thematic report submitted to the Commission on Human Rights: (a) freedom of religion or belief, (b) discrimination, (c) vulnerable groups, (d) intersection of freedom of religion or belief with other human rights, and (e) cross-cutting issues (see E/CN.4/2006/5, paras. 28-35 and annex).

D. Application of a gender perspective

15. As requested by the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur has continued to apply a gender perspective — inter alia, through the identification of gender-specific abuses — in the reporting process, including in information collection and in recommendations made. A number of allegation letters and urgent appeals summarized in the Special Rapporteur's communications reports specifically address practices and legislation that discriminate against women and girls, including with regard to the exercise of their right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief.

16. In his statement to the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 21 October 2010 (see A/C.3/65/SR.25), the Special Rapporteur emphasized that gender-based discrimination had at least two distinct dimensions in the context of

[7] See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/HRC16statement_March2011.pdf and the press statement condemning the killing of the Pakistani Minister for Minority Affairs on 2 March 2011 (www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10786&LangID=E).

[8] See www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/Visits.aspx.

[9] See www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/religion/docs/RapporteursDigestFreedomReligionBelief.pdf.

religion. On the one hand, women belonging to communities that are discriminated against also often suffer from gender-based discrimination — for example, if a woman is discriminated against in the labour market because she has decided to wear a religious symbol. On the other hand, religious traditions or interpretations of religious doctrine sometimes appear to justify, or even call for, discrimination against women. In this context, the Special Rapporteur would like to reiterate that it can no longer be taboo to demand that women's rights take priority over intolerant beliefs that are used to justify gender discrimination.

17. In his statement to the Human Rights Council on 10 March 2011, the Special Rapporteur stressed that religions or beliefs change over time.[10] In the case of practices that may have a negative bearing on the situation of women or girls, for example, some women have called for reform by advocating and pursuing innovative interpretations of the respective sources, doctrines and norms. The Special Rapporteur stressed the importance of ensuring that textbooks and other information materials in public schools draw a sufficiently comprehensive picture of the various religions or beliefs and their internal pluralism. Existing alternative voices within religious traditions, including voices of women, should have their fair share of attention. With regard to wearing religious symbols, the Special Rapporteur emphasized that any restrictions on the freedom to observe religious dress codes deemed necessary in a certain context must be formulated in a non-discriminatory manner. Women's rights, and in particular the principle of equality between men and women and the individual's freedom to wear or not wear religious symbols, should be duly taken into account.

E. Working with mass media organizations to promote an atmosphere of respect and tolerance for religious and cultural diversity, as well as multiculturalism

18. The Human Rights Council, in its resolution 14/11, called upon the Special Rapporteur to work with mass media organizations to promote an atmosphere of respect and tolerance for religious and cultural diversity, as well as multiculturalism. In this context, supported by the OHCHR, the Special Rapporteur held an expert consultation in Geneva on the theme "Equality, non-discrimination and diversity: challenge or opportunity for the mass media?". This consultation, on 30 November 2010, brought together the Special Rapporteurs on freedom of religion or belief, on freedom of opinion and expression and on racism and 12 experts with experience in mass media organizations having a global outreach, including a newspaper editor, a television anchor, a foreign correspondent, a wire service reporter, a blogger and a head of news-gathering, and representatives of an umbrella organization of journalists, an international human rights organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Alliance of Civilizations.

19. As part of the discussion, two case studies were analysed: the media coverage of plans to burn copies of the Koran (see also A/HRC/16/53/Add.1, paras. 414-421) and the challenges of reporting on post-electoral conflicts in an ethnically divided country.[11] The Special Rapporteur learned more about the decision-making processes within the different mass media organizations and the conditions for

[10] www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/HRC16statement_March2011.pdf.

[11] See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=2122&LangID=E.

making their day-to-day judgement calls, adhering to the key principles of professionalism and independence. The experts highlighted several challenges faced by mass media, for example the increasingly competitive nature of the industry and the need to provide news around the clock, coupled with a global and evolving media landscape.

20. Drawing upon their work, the experts also reflected on existing initiatives and guidelines used by mass media organizations to promote equality, freedom of expression and diversity.[12] They acknowledged that self-regulation for mass media is the best system, albeit imperfect, yet also emphasized that self-regulation should not lead to detrimental self-censorship or a conspiracy of silence. The mass media experts also emphasized the importance of skills training, including with respect to investigative reporting.

III. The role of the State in promoting interreligious communication

21. The General Assembly and Human Rights Council have stressed "the importance of a continued and strengthened dialogue in all its forms, including among and within religions or beliefs, and with broader participation, including of women, to promote greater tolerance, respect and mutual understanding" (General Assembly resolution 65/211 and Human Rights Council resolution 16/13). In this context, the Special Rapporteur has decided to put a thematic focus in the present report on the role of the State in promoting interreligious communication. He understands "interreligious communication" to include various forms of exchange of information, experiences and ideas of all kinds between individuals belonging to different theistic, atheistic or non-theistic beliefs or not professing any religion or belief.

22. The Special Rapporteur has held discussions with people from different religious or belief backgrounds who have long-term experience in interreligious communication. He is generally very impressed by the high degree of commitment that countless individuals have shown in this field. Moreover, members of minority groups — even those who so far have been largely excluded from existing dialogue projects — have repeatedly expressed their hopes that interreligious communication may help to improve their situations. Therefore, the Special Rapporteur wishes to encourage States to continue and further increase promotional activities in the field of interreligious communication. They should be conducted in a spirit of inclusiveness, non-discrimination and respect for every human being's freedom of religion or belief. Moreover, the Special Rapporteur extends his utmost appreciation to all those who, sometimes under complicated circumstances, have engaged in interreligious communicative projects designed to eliminate prejudices, stereotypes and hostility.

[12] See for example Al-Jazeera's Code of Ethics (http://english.aljazeera.net/aboutus/2006/11/2008525185733692771.html); the British Broadcasting Corporation's Editorial Guidelines (www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines); the Camden Principles on Freedom of Expression and Equality (www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/1214/en/the-camden-principles-on-freedom-of-expression-and-equality); and the Ethical Journalism Initiative (http://ethicaljournalisminitiative.org).

A. Communication and human rights in general

23. The relationship between communication and human rights is complex. A vigorous culture of communication and public debate constitutes a crucial element for human rights to become a reality. This includes the possibility of organizing protests against human rights abuses and exercising public criticism of existing or emerging obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights. Human rights include free communication, with freedom of expression being the most prominent example. Other examples include freedom of assembly, the right to participate in cultural life, minority rights (e.g., rights of linguistic minorities), the right of accused persons to be heard in criminal trials and, last but not least, freedom of religion or belief. Open and critical communication is also needed to eradicate negative stereotypes, which themselves constitute root causes of mutual suspicion, discrimination, hostility or violence and concomitant human rights abuses.

24. This multifaceted relationship between communication and human rights also manifests itself in the area of freedom of religion or belief, which like other human rights, can flourish only in a climate of open public discourse. At the same time, the right to freedom of religion or belief itself encompasses various forms of freely chosen communication, including the freedom to communicate within one's own religious or belief group, to share one's conviction with others, to broaden one's horizons by communicating with people of different convictions, to cherish and develop contacts across State boundaries, to receive and spread information about religious or belief issues and to try to persuade others by means of peaceful communication. There can be no doubt that activities of intrareligious and interreligious communication in the broadest sense fall within the scope of freedom of religion or belief.[13] In addition, the necessity of dispelling existing stereotypes by promoting communication between members of different religious or belief groups has rightly received particular attention in recent years, given the many incidents of religiously motivated violence (see for example A/HRC/13/40; A/HRC/16/53/Add.1; A/HRC/13/40/Add.1; and A/HRC/10/8/Add.1).

25. Violence between religious or belief groups is often triggered by a dangerous combination of paranoia and public contempt against minorities. Sometimes even tiny minorities are confronted with allegations of undermining peace or national cohesion due to some mysteriously "infectious" effects attributed to them. Such allegations can escalate into fully fledged conspiracy theories fabricated by competing groups, the media or even State authorities. At the same time, members of religious or belief minorities often see themselves exposed to public manifestations of contempt — for instance, based on rumours that they supposedly lack moral values. It is exactly this combination of demonizing conspiracy projections and public contempt that typically triggers violence either directed against members of minorities or occurring between different communities. Hence the eradication of stereotypes and prejudices that constitute the root causes of fear, resentment and hatred must be part and parcel of any policy of preventing violence

[13] Article 6 (i) of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief provides that the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief includes the freedom "to establish and maintain communications with individuals and communities in matters of religion and belief at the national and international levels".

and concomitant human rights abuses. Intrareligious and interreligious communication must play a crucial role in this continuous endeavour.

26. Unfortunately, we sometimes witness the outbreak of violence despite existing inter-group communication, including interreligious communication. The most notorious examples are civil wars in which former neighbours, who used to live peacefully side by side over many years, attack one another violently. Not infrequently, such violence occurs under the auspices of ascribed or actual religious differences. Ample evidence indicates that communication per se does not provide a guarantee for peaceful coexistence between different groups of people. Yet it would be dangerous to use this disturbing observation as an argument for downplaying the significance of communication. Rather, what is needed are effective policies for improving the conditions for a sustainable culture of communication.

27. Research in social psychology has confirmed that communication is generally conducive to peaceful, non-violent relations, provided the following conditions are met: (a) people, or groups of individuals, encounter each other on an equal footing; (b) communication has a long-term perspective (i.e., it goes beyond mere superficial brief encounters); (c) elements of common interest are identified and clarified; (d) there is encouragement from society at large, including from political authorities, in the sense of a general appreciation of inter-group communication.

28. Human rights, in particular the rights to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion and expression and the principle of non-discrimination, can help to bring about circumstances of improved communication, which, in turn, enhance the general prospects for the practical enjoyment of human rights by all. The Special Rapporteur would like to reiterate a quote from Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the former Secretary-General: "Human rights, when viewed from a universal perspective, force us to face the most demanding of all dialectics: the dialectics of identity and otherness, of 'self' and 'other'. They teach us, in the most direct way, that we are, at one and the same time, the same and different" (see E/CN.4/2003/66, para. 119).

29. Many interlocutors with expertise in the field of interreligious dialogue have expressed to the Special Rapporteur their experience-based conviction that regular encounters between individuals and groups, if conducted on an equal footing and with a long-term perspective, foster a better mutual understanding across religious divides. At the same time, it is important to be aware of possible frustrations which participants in dialogue projects might experience. It can happen that, as a result of serious attempts at getting to know one another, people may feel they are further apart than they had previously thought. And yet it would be wrong to contend that communication in such cases has been useless or even an outright failure. On the contrary, however frustrating the experience of limits of mutual understanding may be, a concrete lack of understanding is still generally better than an abstract lack of understanding, as an abstract lack of understanding, in the sense of ascribing complete "otherness" to a person or group typically renders groups of people vulnerable to uninhibited and dangerous negative projections, including conspiracy theories and scapegoating communications in which participants experience the limits of mutual understanding are clearly preferable to an attitude of refusing communication in general. This clarification is intended to encourage people to continue dialogue projects even in the face of frustrating experiences that may at times occur.

B. Formal and informal interreligious communication

30. The underlying understanding of interreligious communication is broad so as to conceptually include individuals holding different religious as well as non-religious convictions. From a human rights perspective, it is crucial to work on the basis of such a broad, inclusive approach. Indeed, this requirement mirrors the universalistic nature of freedom of religion or belief as a human right that is based on the recognition of the inherent dignity of all members of the human family.[14] As the Human Rights Committee rightly pointed out, freedom of religion or belief "protects theistic, non-theistic and atheistic beliefs, as well as the right not to profess any religion or belief" (see CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.4, para. 2). It furthermore includes members of newly established communities, small communities and minority groups as well as minorities within minorities.

31. Interreligious communication can take place in formal or informal settings. The Special Rapporteur understands formal interreligious communication to mean dialogue projects in which the participants meet explicitly in their capacity as followers of their respective religions or beliefs. In informal communication, people may well be aware of, and may, if they wish, talk about, their different religious or non-religious affiliations without organizing their dialogue explicitly along those differences. Informal settings such as multicultural neighbourhoods, schools, clubs, Internet exchange forums and other public services may be conducive to constant interaction as a part of daily life. In a society where there are no boundaries on the basis of religion or belief, constant interaction is much more likely, thus enhancing the prospects of mutual understanding (see A/HRC/10/8, para. 21).

32. There have been interesting examples of countries that have decided to organize inclusive debates about diversity and non-discrimination, bringing together all stakeholders to discuss how to better live together. Indeed, interreligious communication does not exclusively take place in a framework specifically dedicated to religious issues. It can also be part of more general discussions and exchanges, for example about diversity and non-discrimination. Integrating religious issues into the broader dimension of diversity also has the advantage of illustrating that religions and beliefs represent one element of diversity among several others. This could contribute to attenuating differences built or perceived exclusively on religious lines. By expanding the scope of issues discussed, this sort of dialogue can also open up new horizons for seeking possible solutions and compromises.

33. There seems to be a tendency in international forums to narrow the concept of interreligious communication to formal dialogue projects while paying comparatively little attention to the reality, potential and significance of informal communication. However, there are good reasons to understand the two forms as equally relevant because they can complement each other. Formal interreligious dialogue makes it possible, for instance, to tackle stereotypes or prejudices based on an explanation of the self-understanding of the various religious or belief groups involved in such dialogue. Informal interreligious communication can more easily accommodate individuals who do not want to be identified publicly with their religious or belief convictions or people who are less knowledgeable about, or less interested in, theological and philosophical issues. Thus, there are good reasons to further explore the potential of informal interreligious communication, thereby

[14] See preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (resolution 217 A (III)).

broadening the options of promoting encounters between individuals and groups of different religions and beliefs. In general it seems advisable always to take both approaches into account when designing political strategies. Moreover, promoting a combination of formal and informal interreligious communication is one way to do justice to the requirement of conceptual inclusiveness, which itself mirrors the universalistic nature of freedom of religion or belief as a human right.

C. Appreciating diversity of interreligious communication

34. Interreligious communication harbours an inexhaustible diversity of possible settings, forums, agendas, themes, goals and procedures, with the result that any attempts at a comprehensive mapping exercise would necessarily fail. To start with, interreligious settings range from rather exclusive groupings to projects that aspire to be as inclusive as possible. Conducting or promoting exclusive dialogue settings does not, per se, violate the requirement of conceptual inclusiveness, provided some important safeguards are respected (see sect. E below). Bilateral forums may be preferable, for instance, if two religious groups sharing a difficult and painful history of misunderstanding want to communicate intensively for the purpose of overcoming traditional obstacles and improving their coexistence. Religious communities that feel specific theological affinities towards one another may also prefer somewhat exclusive communicative settings that allow them to further develop existing ties. By contrast, politically oriented dialogue projects, for instance those aiming to foster national, regional or international peace, typically require a maximum of inclusiveness in the sense that people from the most widely differing religious or belief backgrounds should have a chance to participate. Moreover, traditionally marginalized persons, such as women, may wish to come together across religious divides in order to identify patterns of discrimination in different religious or philosophical traditions and to envisage strategies that may help rectify that state of affairs. Examples of such settings are interreligious conferences or research projects by feminist theologians.

35. Thematically, interreligious communication can address a multitude of different issues. Dialogue projects may pursue a theological agenda by dealing with methods of analysing sacred texts or the understanding of rites and ceremonies in different traditions. As a result, discussants may discover similarities, overcome traditional misunderstandings and develop respect for remaining theological differences. Other forums of interreligious communication, in particular those supported by international organizations, are devoted chiefly to promoting a broad consensus on political issues, such as protection of the environment, international peace or respect for human rights. On the municipal level, interreligious round tables have been established, for instance, for the purpose of solving neighbourhood conflicts over the construction of religious buildings. Of special importance are educational and training projects designed to familiarize young people or specific groups, such as journalists or other media practitioners, with religious or belief diversity. Finally, there are examples of people across religious divides coming together to work in common on artistic projects. These projects can include creative collaboration, using theatre, festivals and other live events as ways of experiencing a common passion for the arts. Renowned orchestras have been created to demonstrate that music can break down barriers that were once considered impossible to overcome.

36. Interreligious dialogue may manifest itself in concrete events, such as public conferences or ceremonies, as well as in long-term forums or projects. It can take place at a grass-roots level or on the level of religious leadership, or in a combination thereof. Communication can be formally institutionalized or evolve spontaneously. Another important difference concerns the role of the State. While many participants of dialogue projects will probably appreciate active State involvement, others might be more sceptical or generally favour interreligious communication without the presence of State representatives.

37. It is important to appreciate a legitimate diversity of interreligious communication with regard to settings, themes, goals and modes of operation. The conceptually inclusive approach to interreligious communication does not, per se, preclude the possibility of more exclusive communicative personal or group settings, provided some safeguards are respected. As no specific dialogue setting or project may ever claim a monopoly, there must always be room for other forms, themes, settings, goals and projects of interreligious communication. Last but not least, it is advisable to take into account the differences between formal and informal interreligious communication, which can complement each other. It may well be that informal dialogue leads to a more formal process or vice versa depending on the specific context.

D. State responsibility in promoting dialogue

38. Under international human rights law, States are obliged not merely to respect freedom of religion or belief but also to actively protect such freedom against undue interference from third parties. In addition, they should promote an atmosphere of tolerance and appreciation of religious diversity.[15] The General Assembly has repeatedly encouraged activities aimed at promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue in order to enhance social stability, respect for diversity and mutual respect in diverse communities and to create, at the global, regional, national and local levels, an environment conducive to peace and mutual understanding (see resolutions 64/81 and 65/138).

39. The significance of promotional activities of States has recently attracted increasing attention within the entire United Nations system, including from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Alliance of Civilizations, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, OHCHR, the Department of Public Information and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (see A/64/325 and A/65/269). The General Assembly, in its resolution 62/90, proclaimed 2010 the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures; more than 700 activities were undertaken in this context by States, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector and UNESCO institutes and chairs.[16] During its sixty-fifth session, the Assembly proclaimed the first week of February every year the World Interfaith Harmony Week between all religions, faiths and beliefs (see resolution 65/5), and requested

[15] The general obligation of the State as guarantor of human rights has been divided into the three duties to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. The promotion of societal tolerance can be understood as falling within the field of the duty to "fulfil".

[16] See www.unesco.org/en/2010-international-year-for-the-rapprochement-of-cultures.

the Secretary-General to further solicit views of Member States on the possibility of proclaiming a United Nations decade for interreligious and intercultural dialogue and cooperation for peace (see resolution 65/138). The Human Rights Council called upon States to foster a domestic environment of religious tolerance, peace and respect, inter alia by encouraging the creation of collaborative networks to build mutual understanding, promoting dialogue and inspiring constructive action towards shared policy goals and the pursuit of tangible outcomes (see Human Rights Council resolution 16/18).

40. One recent activity, for example, is the launch of a global campaign to create a grass-roots movement of people who advocate for diversity, with an emphasis on creating a stronger link between those working at the local and global levels. The "Do One Thing" campaign was launched by the Alliance of Civilizations and UNESCO on United Nations World Day for Cultural Diversity. It involves a campaign calling on individuals to take an action that is relevant to their lives and that promotes diversity and inclusion, for example in the form of culture, an exhibition, a film or even a particular food. The sharing of experience is to be promoted through the use of social media, website postings and videos. The campaign also has the support of the private sector and large corporations, which allows the project to receive greater visibility.

41. The options for State activities in the field of interreligious communication are manifold and include symbolic or financial support and facilitating or infrastructural activities. The possible impact of symbolic public acknowledgement and encouragement of interreligious communication by representatives of the State should not be underestimated. Social psychological research has underscored the significance of an encouraging societal and political environment for human encounters in yielding productive and sustainable results. In addition to the Government, members of legislative bodies and representatives of other State organizations can play an important role in this regard. States can also designate a particular period of the year for interreligious communication activities (e.g., holding an interfaith week and giving symbolic, financial and infrastructural support to such a project. This approach can also be used as an opportunity to highlight the smaller initiatives, practical projects, art exhibitions and seminars that would otherwise go largely unnoticed.

42. The State can also provide financial support for existing or new interreligious dialogue projects. Not only high-level projects, such as public meetings of religious leaders, but also grass-roots movements warrant attention and appreciation in this regard and should be able to benefit from financial subsidies and infrastructure support. States should favourably consider providing teachers and students with voluntary opportunities for meetings and exchanges with their counterparts of different religions or beliefs, encouraging exchanges of teachers and students and facilitating educational study abroad (see A/HRC/16/53, para. 61 and E/CN.4/2002/73, appendix, para. 10). This can be in the form of annual summer camps or workshop projects that bring together students from different regions for an intensive training course on human rights education, interreligious dialogue and conflict resolution. Providing space and opportunity for participants to meet, interact and engage with their peers can also be a good basis for not only getting rid of negative stereotypes, but also for taking back to their respective countries the skills and techniques acquired in such camps and for perhaps replicating the initiatives in different countries or communities.

43. In addition, the State has the ability to directly invite representatives of religious or belief groups to meetings, thus taking the role of host and facilitator. This can be done at all levels of government, including at the municipal level. Indeed, reports indicate that many successful dialogue projects have actually been initiated by mayors or other municipal actors. Such invitations can have various advantages. The "neutral" framework of the State may facilitate dialogue even between groups which, owing to a history of conflicts or other negative factors, would not be likely to meet at their own initiative (see also para. 50 below). The establishment of interreligious forums facilitated by the State can provide new space for dialogue among groups of different religions, philosophical orientations and other sections of society, including indigenous and small belief communities. Another advantage of State invitations concerns the proposal of constructive agendas for interreligious dialogue projects. The presence by the State in the role of host of interreligious dialogue may also be particularly useful whenever themes of general public interest are to be discussed.

44. Finally, State institutions, such as public schools, provide a very important venue for both informal and formal interreligious communication. States have an obligation to make use of the manifold options inherent in the school system by providing appropriate teaching material, offering interreligious training for teachers and facilitating encounters among pupils. As the Special Rapporteur emphasized in his annual report to the Human Rights Council at its sixteenth session, school education has an enormous communicative potential in this regard (see A/HRC/16/53, para. 21).[17] This can include the distribution of interfaith toolkits at school or on campus, for example through students unions, with a view to increasing dialogue and mutual understanding between different religious groups. Such projects can aim to share resources, offer good practice and training to alleviate possible tensions between certain groups in schools or on university campuses and ultimately strengthen good relations in educational institutions. Moreover, schools and university campuses are seen as pivotal places where interreligious communication occurs.

45. Public museums, at national or municipal levels, can also serve as platforms for facilitating interreligious dialogue projects. For instance, projects that encourage students from both denominational and non-denominational schools to explore interreligious issues can be documented, with the materials being made accessible to the wider community. Museums can also showcase stories told and discussions held, which can further facilitate and initiate discussions with students and the local communities. Furthermore, the mandate of public service broadcasters should require them to promote intercultural understanding and to foster a better understanding of different communities and the issues they face (see principle 9.2 of the Camden Principles[12]).

[17] See also Human Rights Council resolution 16/13, which underlines that educational institutions may offer unique possibilities for constructive dialogue among all parts of society, and that human rights education in particular can contribute to the elimination of negative stereotypes that often adversely affect members of religious minorities.

E. Important caveats

46. State-sponsored interreligious communication, if conducted in an inappropriate manner, can unfortunately have serious negative side effects. If the State is perceived to take sides in favour of one particular religion or one specific strand within the predominant religion, then other religious communities may — for perfectly understandable reasons — prefer not to participate in a State-sponsored dialogue initiative. For instance, in one particular country, a minority community has been pressured by the State in recent years to join the mainstream branch of its particular religion. The frustration felt by the community members ultimately led them to boycott the dialogue project initiated by the State. In another country, the manner in which political leaders conducted debates on the prohibition of wearing religious garments caused a boycott of an interreligious dialogue project by a particular community. These examples illustrate that interreligious dialogue projects may also lead to alienation of the very communities those projects should seek to engage. Moreover, some reports indicate that interreligious forums have been manipulated politically, including for electoral purposes or other political gains.

47. Therefore, the Special Rapporteur would like to reiterate that the general starting point for designing dialogue projects must be the insight that freedom of religion or belief has the status of an inalienable human right based on the recognition of the inherent dignity of all human beings. Hence, when supporting interreligious communication, the State remains under the obligation to always respect the freedom of religion or belief. This general caveat leads to a number of more specific requirements, such as refraining from monopoly claims for State-supported dialogue projects, respecting the voluntary nature of participation, observing the principle of State neutrality and doing justice to the idea of conceptual inclusiveness.

48. State-initiated or State-supported interreligious dialogue projects, for all the symbolic and practical significance they may have, must never claim a monopoly in this area. As mentioned earlier, the possibility of intra- and interreligious communication itself has the status of a universal human rights claim within the scope of freedom of religion or belief. It is therefore clear that religious or belief communities always remain free to establish dialogue projects on their own initiative, without depending on State approval. State-promoted dialogue projects must also be open to public criticism.

49. State-initiated or State-supported interreligious dialogue projects must always proceed on a voluntary basis. They should be presented and perceived as an offer addressed to religious or belief communities, rather than as an obligation imposed on them by the State. If some religious or belief groups prefer not to participate in a given project or generally wish to preserve distance from the State or from other religious groups, such an attitude of reserve must be respected as a part of their freedom of religion or belief. However, reports from different countries indicate that this is not always the case and that some communities have been negatively branded as a result of their decisions not to get involved in specific dialogue projects.

50. When initiating or promoting interreligious communication, the State should refrain from identifying itself with one particular religion or belief — or with one specific type of religion, such as a monotheistic religion. States should aspire to remain neutral in this respect. If, by contrast, the State were to participate in

interreligious projects while identifying itself with one particular religion or belief, this would almost inevitably lead to discrimination against followers of other religions or beliefs. In such a situation, encounters between communities on the basis of equality would be nearly impossible. The principle of State neutrality in questions of religion or belief has been and continues to be a matter of controversy. Neutrality has sometimes been portrayed as indicating a lack of State commitment in this field. Against such a misinterpretation of the concept of neutrality, however, the Special Rapporteur would point to the positive significance of that concept, which lies in the State's obligation to be fair to the members of different religions or beliefs, on the basis of equality, and to refrain from any discriminatory treatment. State neutrality in this sense can be understood as a normative principle deriving from the obligation of a non-discriminatory implementation of freedom of religion or belief. Consequently, it should have an impact also on any promotional activities of the State in the area of interreligious communication. Again, there is evidence that some States fail to comply with this principle, with the effect that interreligious dialogue projects may in some cases amount to undue pressure placed by the State on members of religious or belief minorities. For instance, some State initiatives in interreligious dialogue were reportedly connected to pressure exercised on particular religious groups to limit their religious activities, pending recommendations from the respective Government ministries.

51. The sum total of State-promoted interreligious dialogue projects must, as far as possible, meet the criterion of conceptual inclusiveness. There is a legitimate diversity of dialogue settings, all of which may warrant State support. There may be good reasons for the State also to promote some concrete forms of "exclusive" bilateral communication, for example between certain religious or belief communities that have a history of mutual distrust. This does not in itself present a problem. However, the general balance of State support for interreligious communication should reflect the requirement of conceptual inclusiveness in the sense that all religious or belief groups that would like to participate and benefit from State support should get their fair share of attention and options. An important test question in this regard is the fair inclusion of groups that in a given society have traditionally been neglected, marginalized or completely ignored. Unfortunately, reports indicate that in many countries religious or belief minorities who would like to benefit from State-promoted dialogue continue to suffer from more or less systematic exclusion.

52. From a practical point of view, it may be virtually impossible to fully accomplish the requirement of the concept of inclusiveness. Paying more attention to the often underestimated potential of informal interreligious communication can, however, at least indirectly, help the State come closer to that benchmark. Since informal interreligious communication does not require individuals to identify themselves explicitly as members of a particular religious group, it has the advantage of being open to the participation of people adhering to typically neglected groups, including individuals generally less interested in, or less knowledgeable about, questions of religion or belief. This example reinforces the advisability of combining formal and informal communicative settings between individuals or groups of different religions or beliefs.

F. Addressing adverse side effects

53. Calls for interreligious dialogue have recently attracted increasing attention in international forums, including in the United Nations. For good reasons, such calls typically receive broad or even unanimous applause. It is important, however, to be aware of possible adverse side effects that may occur and to develop appropriate coping strategies. The following remarks do not relate only to State-initiated or State-supported dialogue projects, but may also have a bearing on other forms of interreligious communication.

54. It has been observed that focusing on interreligious diversity may lead to an underestimation of intrareligious diversity, with a possible negative impact on internal pluralism as well as "dissident voices" within the participating communities.[18] A telling metaphor frequently used to describe the general purpose of interreligious dialogue projects is the "building of bridges". This metaphor seems to imply the possibility of clearly locating the discussant groups on two opposite sides of a river or a valley. Moreover, it is often said in this context that sustainable bridge-building presupposes "solid pillars" in the sense that a clear awareness of the respective religious identities is required on both sides of the bridge. This metaphor is revealing in that it obviously presupposes a bipolar juxtaposition of "us and them". Indeed, even dialogue projects that are designed to prevent a "clash of civilizations" sometimes operate implicitly on the basis of a global map of predefined religious and cultural groupings that are thought to be rigid and inflexible. Against such misperceptions, the Special Rapporteur would argue that we should not construe an antagonistic scenario of "us and them" living on different islands. On the contrary, we very much live on one common mainland with multifaceted layers of interconnections, identities and complexities not based solely on religion or belief.

55. The relevance and degree of intrareligious diversity should never be undervalued. To avoid the danger of underestimating or even downplaying pluralism within religious or belief communities, a good combination of intra- and interreligious communication is advisable. Only on the basis of such a combination is it possible to do justice to the real diversity of human beings in questions of religion or belief. This must also include a substantive and substantial participation of women, who unfortunately continue to be marginalized, especially in high-level interreligious dialogue events. The Special Rapporteur would like to reiterate that dialogue projects would greatly benefit from the views of women. Moreover, women from different religions or beliefs have been very effective human rights advocates in situations of communal tensions (see A/HRC/10/8, para. 19; A/HRC/13/40, para. 61; and A/HRC/16/53, paras. 35-36).

56. Another problem connected with the underestimation of internal diversity is a possibly too-stereotypical picture of other religious communities. The apparently assumed bipolar pattern in metaphors such as "bridge-building" seems indeed to imply that the addressees of interreligious dialogue are generally located "on the other side" of the bridge. Thus, in the intention of reaching out widely across imagined divides, it may happen that somewhat "unusual" manifestations of minority beliefs receive undue attention because they may appear to be more attractive for outreach purposes than less salient religious manifestations. It is a

[18] The same is true for intercultural or inter-civilizations dialogue projects.

great irony that, in spite of the explicit intention of finding common ground, some dialogue projects may thus inadvertently solidify existing stereotypes. This danger is particularly pronounced in short-term dialogue projects. In order to counter such dangers, due account needs to be taken of the existing or emerging internal pluralism within the various religious or belief communities. Long-term dialogue projects will more likely reveal the relevance of internal diversity, which in some settings may be more significant than the differences between religious or belief groups.

57. Yet another problem that may occur in interreligious dialogue projects concerns the false pretence of inclusiveness. As elaborated above, conceptual inclusiveness functions as an indispensable reminder that State-promoted interreligious dialogue projects — at least in their sum total — should do justice to all interested parties. However, no concrete dialogue project will ever be able to fully represent that idea of inclusiveness. Bearing this in mind, it is important to refrain from making a problematic pretence of full inclusiveness. For instance, if a Government claims to have invited "all relevant actors" to a given project, this will most likely imply the marginalization of some groups. To symbolically demonstrate the awareness that human diversity in questions of religion or belief will never fully be reflected in any concrete communicative setting, it might be a good idea to reserve and publicly display some empty seats as a reminder of those not represented.

58. It is not easy to develop appropriate coping strategies for the purpose of overcoming or at least alleviating the unintended side effects mentioned above, and no one can present a blueprint suitable for all contexts and communicative settings. Again, one way to at least alleviate the problem is by paying more systematic attention to informal interreligious communication. As mentioned earlier, it would be wrong to see formal and informal interreligious communication as contradictory; rather, they mutually complement each other. Creating better conditions for informal interreligious communication can be one way of coping with risks and unintended side effects of formal interreligious dialogue projects, such as downplaying internal pluralism, bipolarization or false pretence of inclusiveness.

59. Whereas formal interreligious projects have been increasingly recognized in their significance for the promotion of a culture of religious tolerance, the potential of informal interreligious communication still needs to be further explored. In his latest thematic report to the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur, addressing freedom of religion or belief in the context of public schools, makes the point that, just as it would be wrong to ignore religious differences that may come up, it would be equally problematic to organize communication primarily under the auspices of interreligious exchange between predefined groupings. Instead, respect for difference based on freedom of religion or belief requires an attitude of giving individuals the possibility to decide for themselves whether, to which degree and on which occasions they wish to manifest, or not manifest, their religion or belief. Such an atmosphere of relaxed openness provides a fertile ground for developing a sense of diversity as being a normal feature of modern pluralistic societies (see A/HRC/16/53, para. 40).

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

60. **Interreligious communication has an important role to play in the continuous endeavour to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes which constitute the root causes of resentment, fear, paranoia, hatred, hostility, violence and concomitant human rights abuses. In order to contribute to this purpose, communication between individuals or groups should be conducted on an equal footing and with a long-term perspective. Pursuing common practical projects can help to accomplish sustainability in interreligious communication.**

61. **Besides its instrumental role in the eradication of stereotypes and prejudices, intra- and interreligious communication falls within the scope of freedom of religion or belief. Therefore, States have to respect, protect and promote the freedom to communicate within one's own religious or belief group, to share one's conviction with others, to broaden one's horizons by communicating with people of different convictions, to cherish and develop contacts across State boundaries, to receive and spread information about religious or belief issues and to try to persuade others by means of peaceful communication.**

62. **States should take a constructive role in promoting interreligious communication (i.e., the various forms of exchange of information, experiences and ideas between individuals or groups holding different religions or beliefs). As a consequence of the universalistic nature of freedom of religion or belief, interreligious communication must be broadly construed and include theistic, atheistic or non-theistic beliefs as well as the possibility not to profess any religion and belief.**

63. **Interreligious communication harbours an inexhaustible diversity of themes, settings, goals and procedures. Thus, there can be no one-size-fits-all approach with regard to interreligious dialogue. Keeping that crucial insight in mind, States have a number of general options at their disposal to promote interreligious communication, including by:**

(a) **Encouraging interreligious communication by publicly expressing their appreciation for well-defined dialogue projects;**

(b) **Providing financial subsidies to existing or newly created projects;**

(c) **Facilitating dialogue between members of various religious or belief groups in the framework of the State itself;**

(d) **Using and developing forums of regular encounters among people of different religious or belief affiliations.**

64. **Promotion of interreligious dialogue by the State must always be based on respect for every human being's freedom of religion or belief as an inalienable human right. Therefore, when promoting formal or informal dialogue projects States should take into account a number of important caveats:**

(a) **States should refrain from monopolizing interreligious communication;**

(b) **States should not identify themselves with one particular religion or belief;**

(c) **States should endeavour to be inclusive, in the sense that the overall balance of State-promoted interreligious dialogue projects must be fair and non-discriminatory;**

(d) **States should meticulously respect the principle of voluntary participation and should refrain from negatively branding those communities that decide not to participate in an interreligious dialogue project.**

65. **Interreligious dialogue projects should be undertaken with a critical view to avoid adverse side effects, which are more likely to occur in short-term projects. Examples of problematic side effects are neglect or even marginalization of internal diversity within a particular religious community, a false emphasis on "unusual" manifestations of minority beliefs and the exclusion of marginalized religious or belief communities from dialogue projects. Working on a long-term perspective of communication seems the best way of preventing or overcoming such negative side effects.**

66. **Substantive and substantial participation by women in formal interreligious dialogue projects should be a priority in order to address the current imbalance in the composition of high-level interreligious dialogue events where women tend to be marginalized.**

67. **Besides promoting formal interreligious dialogue, States should also become more aware of the potential of informal interreligious communication (i.e., communication across different groups that is not organized explicitly along denominational lines and may include informal settings in multicultural and multireligious neighbourhoods, schools, clubs and other public services). In other words, interreligious communication does not necessarily need to take place in a framework specifically dedicated to religious issues. Both approaches — formal as well as informal interreligious communication — have their specific advantages and thus should be promoted in conjunction.**

68. **In general, interreligious communication should not undervalue the dissident voices or existing intrareligious diversity within the participating communities. Rather than focusing only on "building bridges" between "us and them" seemingly living on different islands, the Special Rapporteur would encourage that "we" should aim for a mutual understanding and appreciation of living on one common mainland with multifaceted layers of interconnections, identities and complexities.**

69. **The Special Rapporteur is impressed by the high degree of commitment that countless people show in the field of interreligious communication. He furthermore wishes to extend his high appreciation to all those who, often under complicated circumstances, have engaged in communicative projects designed to eliminate prejudices, stereotypes and hostility.**

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General and complete disarmament: the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

Letter dated 14 July 2011 from the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I write to you with regard to the open-ended meeting of governmental experts on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which I had the honour of chairing in New York from 9 to 13 May 2011.

During the course of this meeting, I sought to summarize key points arising from discussions under each main theme, which I have compiled in the attached document (see annex). While formally tabled at the meeting and referenced in the meeting report, this summary was prepared under my own responsibility and reflects my interpretation of the main points under discussion. It does not seek to provide a full record of discussions, nor should it be seen as reflecting the consensus view of States.

Since the meeting, a number of participants have asked that the summary be made more widely available to assist States in their efforts to effectively implement the Programme of Action. I therefore request that the present letter and its annex be issued as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Jim **McLay**
Permanent Representative

* A/66/150.

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Annex

Summary by the Chair of discussions at the open-ended meeting of governmental experts on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, 9 to 13 May 2011, New York

The present summary outlines core elements that were discussed during the open-ended meeting of governmental experts on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 9 to 13 May 2011. The summary was prepared by the Chair under his own responsibility and reflects his interpretation of the main points under discussion. It does not represent a full record of all issues discussed during the week, nor should it be seen as reflecting the consensus view of States on any specific points covered in it.

I. Introduction

Under the Programme of Action on Small Arms, Member States meet every two years for a biennial meeting of States or a review conference. In 2009, States decided to convene, additionally, an open-ended meeting of governmental experts to address key implementation challenges and opportunities in the United Nations small arms process. On the basis of extensive and broad-based consultation, marking, record-keeping and cooperation in tracing were identified as the core themes for the meeting, together with the cross-cutting themes of national frameworks, regional cooperation, and international assistance and capacity-building.

The International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument), adopted by the General Assembly in 2005, was developed on the basis of the 2001 Programme of Action. The Instrument is discussed within the framework of the Programme of Action meetings and applies to all Member States.

The International Tracing Instrument is a central tool for assisting States in combating and preventing the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in an effective and concrete manner. Tracing illicit weapons allows States to monitor and disrupt trafficking routes and to identify points of diversion. The Instrument sets out comprehensive and detailed international standards to guide States in their implementation of the three main pillars of marking, record-keeping and cooperation in tracing. The three pillars are highly interdependent: successful tracing depends on adequate marking, record-keeping and international cooperation. Moreover, in accordance with the Instrument, weapons can be traced in all forms of crime and conflict situations.

The Instrument builds on the 2001 Programme of Action and the legally binding 2001 Protocol against the Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, to which not all Member States are parties.

The Firearms Protocol outlines a number of requirements and measures regarding the marking, record-keeping and tracing of firearms from a law enforcement perspective. In the preamble of the International Tracing Instrument States recognized the complementary nature of these two instruments.

The Instrument encourages cooperation, assistance and capacity-building at the international, regional and bilateral levels to support effective implementation. The Programme of Action further emphasizes regional cooperation for tracing purposes, including the strengthening of information exchange mechanisms.

II. Marking

The Chair began discussions under the theme of marking by recalling key international requirements in this area on the basis of the discussion papers. The Instrument prescribes the content of small arm/light weapon markings at the time of manufacture, specifying that they must be unique and allow all States to readily identify the country of manufacture (para. 8 (a)). Commitments under the Instrument relating to post-manufacture marking include the marking of Government armed and security force stockpiles (para. 8 (d)) and the marking of all illicit small arms and light weapons found on national territory (para. 9). The Instrument also emphasizes the importance of import marking, noting that it is a requirement for States parties to the Firearms Protocol (International Tracing Instrument, para. 8(b), Firearms Protocol, art. 8(1)(b)). While the Instrument indicates that the choice of marking methods (stamping, engraving, etc.) is a national prerogative, it prescribes the physical characteristics of weapons markings (para. 7), as well as their placement (para. 10). Complementing these provisions, both the Programme of Action and the Firearms Protocol include measures to prevent the possession of, and trade in, unmarked or inadequately marked small arms and light weapons (Programme of Action, sect. II, para. 8; Firearms Protocol, art. 5).

An expert presentation exploring aspects of this theme was then provided by Murray Smith of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This was followed by a national case study presented by the representative of Brazil.

During their subsequent discussion on the topic of marking, participants identified key challenges and opportunities for implementation; exchanged views and shared relevant national experiences; and considered practical solutions to overcome common problems.

Participants shared information on their national marking practices, including on the contents and methods of marking. They discussed marking at the time of manufacture as well as post-manufacture marking, including the marking of Government armed and security force stocks, the marking of weapons found on national territory and marking at the time of import.

Several participants noted that new developments and trends in the manufacture and design of weapons posed additional challenges for marking. These included:

- Development of weapons families with similar design features and consequently an increased risk of misidentification

- The trend towards modularity in weapons design, namely the routine changing of major components.

Moreover, some participants emphasized the specific challenges posed by polymer frame weapons, in particular the practical problems inherent in ensuring a durable mark on these weapons, at both the time of manufacture and of import.

One participant suggested the establishment of a technical committee, composed of industry and government representatives, to consider new developments of this kind and articulate possible approaches to addressing them.

Several participants highlighted the key role that import marking can play in facilitating tracing. It was also acknowledged that import marking posed particular challenges in balancing the need for weapons traceability, for which durable marking was essential, with considerations regarding the safety and physical integrity of the weapon.

Other challenges highlighted by participants included:

- Falsification, alteration or erasure of serial numbers and other markings
- Trade in illicit parts (namely, reconstituting an unmarked weapon from such parts)
- The need to make provision in national control frameworks for the temporary lawful export (and re-import) of weapons in accordance with the Instrument (for example, for hunting overseas)
- Incorporation of craft production into national regulatory systems
- Lack of equipment, expertise and other capacity shortfalls related to marking.

Some participants noted with concern the low number of countries reporting on their implementation of the Instrument and encouraged the inclusion of more technical detail in national reporting.

Many participants underlined the importance of marking for effective tracing cooperation and acknowledged that a lack of resources was preventing full implementation of the provisions of the Instrument on marking. A number of specific assistance and capacity-building needs were identified, including:

- Training, including the continuous training of law enforcement personnel in weapons identification
- Acquisition of necessary equipment, including marking machines
- Strengthening of existing legislation and the adoption of new legislation
- Transfer of relevant technology, including for purposes of rendering marking more resistant to efforts at falsification and sanitization.

In addition to the discussion on key challenges to implementation, participants considered a range of solutions and articulated concrete proposals to overcome such challenges. In relation to import marking, some participants suggested that weapon manufacturers be required to put import marks on weapons prior to their transfer. Several participants also highlighted the potential of new technologies such as laser engraving for import marking and electronic databases and digital photography for weapons identification. Some participants also noted that covert markings, applied

in addition to regular markings on the weapon's surface, could be a useful tool for enhancing weapon traceability and for countering attempts to falsify or sanitize markings.

Many participants highlighted the importance of enacting adequate legislation on marking, including the need for appropriate penalties and evidentiary rules (for example, shifting the burden of proof for the possession of firearms with sanitized markings). Some participants described efforts being undertaken to develop new methods for the recovery of sanitized markings.

Some participants shared their experience in raising awareness among craft producers of applicable national laws and penalties and in training craft producers in marking the weapons they manufactured. Some participants also noted practical differences regarding the marking of small arms versus the marking of light weapons.

Some participants stated that difficulties associated with the marking of polymer frame weapons were less relevant for tracing in conflict zones where the use of such weapons was limited.

Throughout the discussions, participants outlined a range of positive experiences in tackling marking capacity shortfalls, including enhanced information-sharing, better coordination of assistance and the pooling of resources at the international, regional and subregional levels, as well as strengthened partnerships with donor Governments, United Nations agencies and other international and regional organizations.

III. Record-keeping

The Chair began discussions under the theme of record-keeping by recalling key international requirements in this area on the basis of the discussion papers. The record-keeping provisions of the Instrument are framed in broad terms, specifying in particular that the choice of methods for record-keeping is a national prerogative. The objectives are clear, however: the establishment and maintenance of accurate and comprehensive records necessary for tracing (para. 11). More specifically, Member States have undertaken, to the extent possible, to keep records pertaining to small arms and light weapons indefinitely. In any case, they have agreed to maintain manufacturing records for at least 30 years and all other records, including records of import and export, for at least 20 years. The Instrument thus extends the Firearms Protocol's 10-year minimum for the maintenance of firearm records, although the latter, in contrast to the International Tracing Instrument, encourages States to also keep records of firearm parts, components and ammunition (art. 7).

An expert presentation exploring aspects of this theme was provided by Gary Fleetwood of the Australian Crime Commission. This was followed by a national case study presented by the representative of Kenya.

In their subsequent discussions on the topic of record-keeping, participants identified key challenges and opportunities for implementation; exchanged views and shared relevant national experiences; and considered practical solutions to overcome common problems.

Participants recognized that national record-keeping practices varied widely. It was noted that this was party a reflection of different constitutional structures, with record-keeping systems in federal States tending to be multi-tiered and complex.

Despite this, participants generally emphasized that national record-keeping systems shared many common features, in particular the core objective of timely and reliable tracing. In this regard, many participants noted that insufficient and/or inaccurate record-keeping was a key reason for tracing failures. A second objective mentioned by many participants was the use of records in the prosecution of weapons-related offences.

Several prerequisites for successful record-keeping were identified by participants. These included:

- Establishing adequate legislative frameworks, including the requirement that all relevant actors keep records
- Reliable weapons marking to ensure a unique record
- Effective enforcement, including sanctions for non-compliance
- Maintenance of records for a sufficient length of time
- Close cooperation with the private sector, including provisions for the handover of weapons records to Governments by companies that go out of business.

The discussions reflected diverse national practices regarding the length of time that weapons records were required to be kept. Some participants indicated that record-keeping systems in their countries provided for shorter periods than those stipulated in the Instrument. Others underlined that they either met or exceeded the Instrument's minimum standards of 30 years for manufacturing records and 20 years for all other records. Several participants reported that records were kept indefinitely, noting the reduced costs involved owing to electronic data storage. These participants emphasized the important long-term benefits for effective tracing arising from the indefinite retention of records.

Participants also considered whether records should be deleted following the destruction of a weapon. Some participants suggested that such practices could potentially increase the risk of illicit diversion of weapons and make tracing harder. Other participants regarded the retention of such records unnecessary where weapons were effectively destroyed.

Participants also outlined measures undertaken to tackle key implementation challenges. Some participants indicated that their Governments were currently in the process of developing centralized firearm registers. Many others outlined efforts they had undertaken to convert their paper records into electronic form. Some noted particular challenges in this area, including a lack of qualified personnel. software limitations and the need for strong project control during the transition process.

Several participants also emphasized the importance of qualified — and sufficiently numerous — personnel for the successful and accurate maintenance of weapons registers, both in manual and electronic format. Some also stressed that the targeted and ongoing training of relevant officials was a key element in ensuring the accuracy of data, and consequently in facilitating effective weapons identification

and tracing. Participants identified several other challenges related to effective and accurate record-keeping, including:

- Ensuring uniformity and data linkages across multiple registers in a country
- Integration of record-keeping systems that are operated separately by law enforcement and military institutions
- Ensuring the accurate identification of weapons and their markings, as well as the accurate entry of this information into registries, to facilitate successful tracing
- Safeguarding against unauthorized access to record-keeping systems, as well as unauthorized use by those who have access
- Recording of weapons in conjunction with their collection and destruction in post-conflict settings, and in other contexts where States seek to increase their control over the circulation of small arms.

Some participants outlined specific cost-effective measures that could be taken to strengthen the effective and accurate functioning of national record-keeping systems. These included practical measures related to the establishment and maintenance of electronic record-keeping systems, such as defining minimum content for the creation of an electronic record, the inclusion of computer surveillance measures to search the system for incompatible data, and regular spot checks of records to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data stored.

Many participants underscored the need for financial, material and technical assistance to support their record-keeping activities. Several participants made specific requests for technical assistance to help their national authorities to manage the conversion of paper records into electronic form. In this regard, several participants emphasized the importance of adequate training of personnel and the provision of technical equipment. Some participants highlighted the need to build capacity in ensuring effective record-keeping in post-conflict situations as part of broader weapons collection programmes. Several participants stressed that the understaffing of firearm registries — and under-resourcing of firearms registries more broadly — was another problem warranting priority attention.

IV. Cooperation in tracing

The Chair began discussions under the theme of cooperation in tracing by recalling key international requirements in this area on the basis of the discussion papers. Building upon both the Programme of Action and the Firearms Protocol, the Instrument establishes a relatively detailed set of rules governing the issuance of and response to a tracing request. The Instrument underlines the need for sufficient information in any tracing request, including markings, type and calibre, as well as the intended use of the information being sought (para. 17). States receiving a tracing request are to acknowledge receipt within a reasonable time (para. 19). They also undertake to provide all available information sought by the requesting State relevant for the purpose of tracing (para. 20). Any delay or restriction in the content of their response, or refusal to respond, must fall within the scope of the exceptions set out in paragraph 22 and be explained (para. 23). As with record-keeping, the choice of tracing system is a national prerogative, yet the Instrument commits States

to ensuring they are capable of undertaking traces and responding to tracing requests in accordance with its requirements (para. 14).

Expert presentations exploring aspects of this theme were then provided by Tracy Hite of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and by Simonetta Grassi of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

In their subsequent discussions on the topic of cooperation in tracing, participants identified key challenges and opportunities for implementation; exchanged views and shared relevant national experiences; and considered practical solutions to overcome common problems.

Participants discussed how tracing cooperation was working in practice, specifically within the framework of the Instrument. They shared a range of national experiences, with many emphasizing that weapons tracing was a key investigative tool and some illustrating its application to both crime and conflict settings.

Several participants recalled that tracing did not stand alone, but was in fact part of a broader set of tools that included such things as ballistics information systems. Many participants underlined the value of tracing in detecting and potentially disrupting illicit arms flows — and in prosecuting those involved in such activities. A number of participants asserted that the potential of weapons tracing was currently underutilized and that there was a tendency to neglect the prosecution of firearms-related offences in favour of other offences that were easier to prosecute. Yet many participants stressed that, with the increased globalization of criminal activity, including firearms trafficking, the importance of effective weapons tracing was greater than ever before.

While the meeting discussions focused on the use of weapons tracing for law enforcement purposes, some participants indicated that their national authorities were also responding to tracing requests from experts panels reporting to United Nations sanctions committees within the framework of Security Council efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Participants shared a wide range of experiences in tracing. Some participants reported high success rates in their tracing operations, especially for weapons produced in recent decades following the introduction in many countries of systematic weapons marking and record-keeping. Others reported that some trace requests they issued had received no response at all.

Several participants highlighted the role of INTERPOL's information infrastructure, especially the National Central Bureau system, and also noted the value of bilateral and regional frameworks for tracing cooperation.

A number of participants noted that tracing failures were mainly the result of two key factors: insufficient identifying information and the inaccurate identification of weapons, including weapons markings. Many participants underlined the importance of sufficient information in trace requests, including minimum weapons-related information and additional information regarding the relevant case. Some participants reported that the loss of records was hampering effective tracing in certain cases.

Several participants indicated that cooperation with manufacturers was good overall and underlined the critical importance of industry-Government partnerships

for effective tracing and in addressing new technical and policy challenges as they emerged.

Other challenges identified included:

- Legal and bureaucratic impediments to the timely provision of data, including in countries where record-keeping was multi-tiered
- Enabling direct lines of communication among relevant officials in different countries
- Conflicts between confidentiality requirements governing the release of tracing information and rules providing for its disclosure in the context of judicial proceedings in the country of receipt
- Delays in the processing of tracing requests, with the risk that suspects would be released for lack of evidence before the completion of such traces
- Difficulties of tracing weapons that had crossed several borders
- The long lifespan and complex chain of ownership of many small arms and light weapons
- Licensed production, which in some cases resulted in the misidentification of the manufacturer and/or country of manufacture.

Alongside these challenges, some participants highlighted measures that could enhance weapons tracing and its effective use in a range of contexts. These included:

- Emerging use of digital photography as a means of improving weapons identification
- Use of proof marks to overcome a lack of information on the country of origin
- Use of laboratory techniques to recover partly obliterated markings
- Use of trace results, including information generated on crime location and perpetrators, to develop targeted law enforcement interventions
- Use of weapons tracing to indicate the likely involvement of weapons traffickers in particular crimes
- Use of trace results to assess the effectiveness of national import controls
- Making information on traced small arms available to appropriate agencies at the national, regional and international levels in order to help prevent diversion.

Many participants highlighted the need to build capacity for effective tracing. They underlined the importance of adequate institutional capacity for tracing and stressed the need for sufficient human, material and financial resources, including the training of relevant personnel for improved weapons identification.

V. National frameworks

The Chair began discussions under the theme of national frameworks by recalling key international requirements in this area on the basis of the discussion

papers. States have recognized that the primary responsibility for solving the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects falls on all States (Programme of Action, sect. III, para. 1). Under the Instrument, Member States have undertaken to put in place, where they do not exist, the laws, regulations and administrative procedures needed to ensure the effective implementation of the Instrument (para. 24). Associated commitments include the designation of one or more national points of contact for purposes of tracing and broader aspects of the implementation of the Instrument, including the exchange of information on national implementation (para. 25).

Expert presentations exploring aspects of this theme were then provided by Simonetta Grassi of UNODC, drawing on experiences and activities in assisting States to implement the Firearms Protocol, and by Guy Lamb of the Institute for Security Studies.

In their subsequent discussions on the topic of national frameworks, participants identified key challenges and opportunities for implementation; exchanged views; shared relevant national experiences; and considered practical solutions to overcome common problems.

Participants shared information and experiences on their respective national legislation and institutional structures as they related to the implementation of the Instrument.

Some participants raised general points, including the importance of national inventories of implementation gaps and needs, and the value-added of linking national frameworks for marking, record-keeping and tracing with national programming in related areas, such as national development. Several participants outlined the plans of their Governments to develop or enact new legislation or to amend and strengthen existing legislation.

Some participants noted that tracing in States emerging from armed conflict often differed from that in States where it was primarily used for law enforcement purposes, although the discussions also revealed points of convergence.

Several participants emphasized the need to fully implement existing laws and underscored the importance of their effective enforcement. Regarding enforcement, a number of participants again stressed that there was considerable value in prosecuting firearms-related offences in conjunction with associated offences where the opportunity arose.

Many participants noted the importance of the "whole of government" approaches in enhancing national coordination, and shared their experiences with utilizing specific mechanisms and policy instruments to structure participation and coherent action across government.

Among the mechanisms employed for enhanced coordination, some participants specifically mentioned national firearms (or small arms) commissions, national firearms platforms and national management committees. Several participants emphasized the need for broad participation in such institutions so as to bring together all government agencies involved in the implementation of the Instrument and the Programme of Action, as well as industry and other representatives from civil society.

Many participants cited national action plans as a key policy instrument for supporting marking, record-keeping and tracing work.

A number of participants highlighted the utility of these mechanisms and policy instruments across a range of areas, in particular for purposes of:

- Developing and fine-tuning national small arms policy
- Reviewing national implementation of existing legislation and procedures
- Sharing information and coordinating policy across all of government
- Identifying needs and gaps in the implementation of the Instrument and the Programme of Action.

Participants discussed how national frameworks for weapons marking, record-keeping and tracing were linked to bilateral, regional and international frameworks. In that regard, many participants highlighted the key role of national points of contact and national reporting in facilitating full implementation.

Several participants emphasized the need for a national point of contact that was police-based and dedicated to tracing. These participants explained that they considered police channels to be better placed to protect confidential information in the context of tracing cooperation. Some participants noted that their national authorities had appointed an additional point of contact for the exchange of general information relating to the implementation of the Instrument, including assistance needs. Others referred to a single point of contact in their interventions, not necessarily police-based.

Challenges mentioned by a number of participants in this area included:

- Ensuring that point of contact information was effectively communicated to all Member States, in particular through the Programme of Action-Institute for Security Studies website
- Securing agreement among different governmental agencies on a single point of contact for tracing.

Further, several participants expressed concern about the low levels of national reporting on the implementation of the Instrument to date, including the resulting shortfall in information exchange. Those participants noted that the reporting burden for the Instrument — and increasingly for the Programme of Action — was in their view alleviated somewhat by the use of a biennial reporting schedule.

As in other thematic areas, many of the participants who took the floor underlined the crucial importance of international assistance and capacity-building to the implementation, consolidation and strengthening of national frameworks for marking, record-keeping and tracing.

Specific capacity-building needs highlighted by participants included:

- Review and development of legislation
- Sharing of technical expertise
- Provision of equipment.

Some participants also emphasized the need for donor coordination in ensuring coherent national action across the areas of marking, record-keeping and tracing.

Other participants mentioned challenges related to maintaining the necessary level of expertise among relevant personnel and language barriers in accessing relevant technology. Many participants underscored that they regarded bilateral, regional and international frameworks as indispensable complements to national efforts.

VI. Regional cooperation

The Chair began discussions under the theme of regional cooperation by recalling key international standards and requirements in this area on the basis of the discussion papers. The Instrument encourages cooperation at the regional level to support its effective implementation (para. 26). The Programme of Action similarly emphasizes regional cooperation for tracing purposes, including the strengthening of information exchange mechanisms (sect. III, para. 1).

A regional case study exploring aspects of this theme was then provided by the Regional Centre on Small Arms (for the Great Lakes Region and Horn of Africa).

In their subsequent discussions on the topic of regional cooperation, participants identified key challenges and opportunities for implementation; exchanged views and shared relevant experiences; and considered practical solutions to overcome common problems.

Many of the participants that spoke on this issue underlined the ongoing value of regional cooperation to the implementation of the Instrument and the Programme of Action. Several participants noted the substantial progress that had been made in strengthening such cooperation and stressed its continuing importance for supporting implementation efforts.

Participants discussed numerous ways in which regional organizations were assisting States on various aspects of the implementation of the Instrument and the Programme of Action, including:

- Coordinating national action at the regional and subregional levels
- Developing model legislation, regional implementation standards and best practice guidelines
- Organizing regional meetings and seminars
- Assisting States in the assessment of their needs
- Building institutional capacity
- Conducting training and other capacity-building activities
- Strengthening cooperation among regional and subregional organizations and United Nations agencies.

Some participants emphasized that for maximum effectiveness, regional organizations needed to be in regular contact with their member States. Other principles highlighted for effective regional cooperation included continuity, complementarity and cost-effectiveness. With regard to the latter, some participants underlined the need to make the most of limited resources and to focus on initiatives that would have the broadest possible impact.

In relating the details of their work, some regional organizations reported on a variety of measures, extending beyond weapons marking, record-keeping and tracing, that were designed to tackle a broader range of small arms issues.

Several participants cited the provision of marking machines through regional organizations, such as the Regional Centre on Small Arms and the Organization of American States (OAS), as an example of regional cooperation worthy of emulation.

Many participants also offered examples of interaction among regional and subregional organizations, indicating that this was facilitating the exchange of experience among experts and enhancing knowledge acquisition. Some participants also noted that regional meeting and workshops were building and strengthening relationships between regional and subregional organizations.

On the other hand, some participants suggested there was a risk of regional and subregional organizations becoming too large and losing their proximity to member States, thereby losing some measure of their effectiveness. Some participants noted that the extent of regional cooperation varied according to different regional and subregional contexts. These participants suggested that bilateral and trilateral relationships could present useful alternatives in areas where regional cooperation was more limited.

Several other challenges at the regional level were mentioned by participants. These included:

- Lack of harmonization of national legislation in certain regions
- Lack of legal regulation in certain issue areas, for example marking
- Logistical and transportation shortfalls (precluding, for example, the transportation of marking machines to where they were needed)
- Lack of donor attention to certain regions
- Duplication of efforts among organizations in a single region
- Limited awareness of small arms issues and a reluctance on the part of some communities to engage on those issues.

Most participants stressed the need for international assistance, including technical and financial assistance. Some pointed to the need for transparency and coordination in the provision of assistance so as to avoid overlap and duplication.

Several elements were identified by participants as particularly important for strengthening regional cooperation, including:

- Support for the development of national action plans and associated national legislation
- Enhanced exchange of information and lessons learned
- Establishing and strengthening links among regional organizations
- Building strong partnerships with civil society and research institutions
- Safety nets for regions lacking effective cooperation mechanisms.

VII. International assistance and capacity-building

The Chair began discussions under the theme of international assistance and capacity-building by recalling key international norms and principles in this area on the basis of the discussion papers. The Instrument underlines the importance of international assistance and capacity-building for its effective implementation (paras. 27 to 29). States are encouraged to provide technical, financial and other assistance in building national capacity for marking, record-keeping and tracing, and to examine — and facilitate the transfer of — technologies for the improved tracing and detection of illicit small arms and light weapons (paras. 27 and 28). Cooperation with the United Nations (on information exchange) and INTERPOL (on operational aspects) is also emphasized (paras. 30 to 35).

An expert presentation exploring aspects of this theme was provided by Daniel Prins of the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat.

In their subsequent discussions on the topic of international assistance and capacity-building, participants identified key challenges and opportunities for implementation; exchanged views and shared relevant experiences; and considered practical solutions to overcome common problems.

Many of the participants who spoke on this issue underlined the pivotal role that international assistance and capacity-building played in the implementation of the Instrument and the Programme of Action. Several participants noted that assistance and capacity-building were cross-cutting issues throughout the Instrument and the Programme of Action. Others noted the voluntary nature of such assistance.

Many participants stressed the need for enhanced international assistance and capacity-building, including technical and financial assistance. Several participants presented specific requests relating to marking, record-keeping and tracing. Some pointed to the need for transparency and coordination in the provision of assistance, so as to avoid overlap and duplication, and to the importance of having assistance coordinated across the government as a whole.

Representatives of States and of regional and international organizations shared numerous examples of the types of assistance they had received and provided. These included:

- Technical assistance
- Financial assistance
- Provision of equipment, including marking machines and record-keeping software
- Technology transfer
- Training, including on data entry and the use of marking machines
- Institutional capacity-building
- Development and provision of tools to implement the Instrument and the Programme of Action, including model legislation, guidelines and standards
- Establishment of mechanisms to help match needs and resources, such as the Group of Interested States and the web-based Programme of Action-Institute for Security Studies

- Information exchange
- Small arms research, seminars and workshops.

The examples provided by participants reflected the fact that international assistance and capacity-building took place at the bilateral, regional and international levels. It was also noted that assistance efforts could help to build the capacity of both recipient and donor States, as it could enhance inter-agency cooperation and raise awareness among relevant agencies in donor States.

Some participants noted the important role of South-South cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation. Some participants also noted the role of aid agencies in the provision of relevant assistance, and stressed the importance of engaging them in the small arms process.

Several participants expressed concerns regarding the imposition of conditions on assistance provided, and stressed that donor States should take an equitable approach and remain open to providing assistance to all States requiring it.

On the other hand, some participants stressed that a certain level of responsibility also rested on recipient States, noting that national ownership was critical for the success and effectiveness of assistance. Some participants suggested that, in addition to self-identifying their assistance needs, recipient States also had a responsibility to draw on available national resources, including human resources, to support small arms programmes and projects, and noted the critical importance of maintaining political support for implementation in the recipient country.

Several participants acknowledged that there was no "one size fits all" approach when it came to the provision of assistance, and that some flexibility was required to adapt to the different needs and contexts of recipient States.

Many participants emphasized the need to take a holistic approach to capacity-building to ensure its long-term effectiveness through the provision of ongoing support. Examples of such ongoing support included: training in the proper maintenance and use of marking equipment; the provision of associated equipment, such as computers or record-keeping software, along with related training; and logistical support.

Other principles highlighted as important during the discussions included the coordination, harmonization and effectiveness of international assistance and capacity-building.

Some participants noted the importance of having a United Nations trust fund to provide dedicated support in responding to requests from States for assistance with implementation of the Instrument and the Programme of Action. The Office for Disarmament Affairs does have such a trust fund in place.

Several additional challenges were mentioned by participants. These included:

- Matching needs and resources
- Ensuring harmonized and coordinated approaches to assistance
- Ensuring the sustainability of knowledge and technology transfer
- Building capacity to enable self-identification of assistance needs.